

# **EVALUATION OF ENGAGE** **PROGRAMME**

## **INTERIM REPORT 1 – PILOT** **PROGRAMME**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report is sub-divided into six main sections followed by Appendices. A brief outline of each section follows:-

### Section 2. Background and Context

In this section of the report we consider the background and context of the Engage programme including issues such as homelessness and unemployment. We then move on to look at the Foyer model and the Equal programme. Homelessness in Northern Ireland is analysed by reviewing the relevant statistics gathered from a number of key providers and Government departments for the last two years - comparisons are made with the relevant figures for Great Britain. The impact of related issues including Care, Education and Employment status are also analysed. Following this overview the response of the voluntary sector is described with particular attention paid to the contribution of Simon Community and Foyer, with particular consideration given to the development of the Foyer Model and its application in Northern Ireland. Section two concludes by outlining the background and key principles of EQUAL, the key players involved, and its application in Northern Ireland.

### Section 3. The Engage Programme

In this section the report explores the early development of the Engage programme by Foyer and Simon Community and situates the development of the programme in the learning from delivering previous programmes such as the New Deal Core Gateway programme. This pointed to the need for a programme which would improve motivation and self-esteem in the target group, a programme which would support residents through training, offer a series of short-term goals and clearly demonstrate visible successes. The formal submission to Equal is also noted as is the successful outcome to the process which commenced the recruitment phase.

Section 3 continues by exploring in some depth the key aspects of the Engage Programme including the structure of the Engage Development Partnership, the key features of the four operational sites and the programme's management.

This is followed by an overview of the Learning Power programme developed by Professor Guy Claxton including the objectives of the Certificate in Learning Power and a breakdown of the modules in the framework. The section concludes with a look at the Transnational Partner arrangements.

#### Section 4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The section reiterates the five key tasks outlined in the evaluation terms of reference, which are to:-

- Design an evaluation framework, methodology and some of the data collection tools
- Design qualitative data collection tools and undertake interviews and focus groups with staff and clients
- Undertake ongoing analysis of data returns (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Produce quarterly reports to the Development Partnership
- Produce two interim reports (June 2006, March 2007) and a final report (a draft report for June 2007, a final report for September 2007).

Particular emphasis is put on the approach in conducting the assignment which is based upon an ethical approach to inclusion and consultation which seeks to respond to the needs of the client group and ensure that the process is one of empowerment and inclusion, rather than exploitative. A range of methodological considerations then follow including the aims and objectives of this report, the key research and evaluation methodologies employed as well as a rationale for the combination of methods undertaken. The section concludes with a consideration of the challenges in conducting the evaluation.

#### Section 5. Key Findings

As part of the pilot evaluation a number of interviews and focus groups with staff and residents were undertaken in order to gain some insight into the early stages of programme implementation and its impact. Section five gives an overview of some of the thoughts and feelings of staff and residents.

As is to be expected in building any partnership some difficulties and challenges occurred and these are identified. Issues include 'ownership' of the programme, changes in senior personnel, membership and representation on the Development Partnership which have affected its dynamics – all these issues however were acknowledged as predictable when developing and delivering a new style of programme, indeed the general consensus reported was that progress had speeded up more recently.

The resident programme is reported as 'unique to Northern Ireland and is highly innovative, given its strong focus on motivation, its flexibility and the fact that it compliments other training on offer to residents'. The recruitment process, despite initial delays, is described as a success in terms of including residents in the process. With regard the operation and delivery of the programme there was a general consensus that the programme evidenced delays in its early stages but that in hindsight these were inevitable due to the innovative nature of the programme. There was general agreement that these initial problems had been addressed over the course of the pilot phase of the programme.

The report notes that one of the major factors in the successful implementation of the programme has been the ability of the programme workers and the programme itself to motivate the residents. In terms of the delivery of Learning Power the impact of the geographical separation of sites and the lack of cross fertilisation between and across sites is reported on, as is the impact of the delay in acquiring accreditation.

Staff training is identified as the strand of the programme about which there has been most concern – some of the issues are highlighted as contextual whilst some are related to the structure and timetable of the programme. There has also been a combination of external and internal factors at play in the delay in implementing the staff training. The report notes that unavoidable changes to staffing structures and personnel led to some initial delays which were exacerbated by the time it took to develop the partnership.

In terms of achievements to date all those interviewed were pleased with the concrete achievements of the first six months and were genuinely hopeful of building upon them in the coming year:

In the next part of this section of the report we present the monitoring data from the programme, beginning with a profile of residents in relation to gender, community background, economic status and disability. This is followed by an overview of the programme modules undertaken to date by residents; resident views and reflections on their involvement with the programme, including motivations for taking part in the programme; and satisfaction levels with the contents of modules, the levels of informality in sessions, the skills of facilitators and the 'usability' of the Richter Scales. The section concludes with six case studies to add qualitative depth to the monitoring data.

## Section 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

In terms of Programme Development and Operation and Development the report concludes that initial difficulties have been overcome to the point where achievements are now considerable. The programme has been well received by residents, in particular they reported that the role of the programme officers has been key to enhancing their motivation. The flexibility of the programme has also worked well with residents allowing them to choose the type of module and level which best meets their needs.

- Resident numbers have been achieved with 60 participating in the pilot stage of the programme
- Whilst aims and objectives may not have been fully met to date progress is being made to achieve these. All respondents are confident that the model of best practice would be developed and implemented and that the employability of participants had been enhanced.
- The impact of the programme has been to improve the motivation of residents and to provide them with opportunities to enhance their employability.

- The Learning Power course has generally been well received by residents, with the number of modules on offer and the number undertaken very encouraging.

The report finishes with a series of recommendations on the following:-

- Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Better tracking of respondents for evaluation purposes
  - Monthly evaluation meetings
  - Continuing attendance of Trademark at Engage Forum
- Inclusion
  - The programme to remain realistic about levels of involvement / achievement
  - Open days at each geographical site for DP members
- Communication
  - Future e-briefings to be copied to all those involved in the programme
- Transferability and sustainability of Engage
  - Mainstreaming and funding issues
  - The key role of the Housing Executive, Social Security Agency and DEL
  - How can the programme be adapted to learning in the homelessness sector
- Next Steps
  - Next steps for the evaluation process
  - Monitor and Evaluate staff training
  - Assess the role of support structures (DP, Proteus, DEL)
  - Assess the role of the Transnational partnership
  - Consider mainstreaming and sustainability issues

## 2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In this section of the report we consider the background and context of the Engage programme including issues such as homelessness and unemployment. We then move on to look at the Foyer model and the Equal programme.<sup>1</sup>

### Homelessness in Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup>

Housing policy in Northern Ireland (NI) is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development (DSD). Specific responsibilities include<sup>3</sup>:

- Overall control and responsibility for preparing and directing social housing policy in Northern Ireland;
- Working closely with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Registered Housing Associations in implementing social housing policies; and
- Taking the lead in the Promoting Social Inclusion review of the difficulties faced by people who are homeless

Northern Ireland has a high proportion of its housing market in owner occupation – 478,400 dwellings or nearly 70% (68.9%) of total occupied stock. The remaining quarter of the market is divided between NI Housing Executive (NIHE) tenancies (13.9%), Housing Associations (3.1%), the private rented sector (9.2%) and vacant dwellings (4.9%).<sup>4</sup> The NI Housing Executive is equivalent to the Housing Corporation in England and Wales and operates through 33 district offices NI wide.

The routes into housing for young people in Northern Ireland are minimal.

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<sup>1</sup> Information sourced from Engage application to Equal fund, paper on social issues from Fiona Boyle, [www.Foyer.net](http://www.Foyer.net), and [www.equalni.org](http://www.equalni.org)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics : Council for Homeless, Chainmail Issue 6.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/hsdiv-housing.htm>

<sup>4</sup> DSD – Northern Ireland Housing Statistics, 2005

Whilst not as expensive as many areas of Great Britain, owner occupation is clearly an unobtainable dream for the majority of young people<sup>5</sup>.

Access to social housing is oversubscribed and suffers from long waits, often 2 to 3 years in some areas. Whilst the numbers waiting for social housing have increased in latter years, the number of tenancies available has decreased. The total number of NIHE tenancies decreased from 113,400 at March 2002 to stand at 96,600 at 31 March 2005. One contribution to this was an increase in the number of dwellings sold by the Housing Executive – this rose by 22% between 2001 and 2003. This has now decreased over the last couple of years to last year's (2005) figure of 3,221.

In addition, the private rented sector in Northern Ireland is limited to certain geographical areas (mainly areas of higher/further education) and is costly for young people in terms of entry (deposit and rent in advance) and maintenance (monthly rent).

In recent years homelessness has increased by a staggering 58% (12,694 in 2000/2001 to 20,121 in 2005/2006). Previous research has also indicated that in a population of around 1.7 million the level of homelessness equated to 1 out of every 73 people – a rate higher than in Great Britain.<sup>6</sup> As the statistics in Table 1 demonstrate the trend of increasing levels of homelessness has continued over the last two years, particularly amongst young single people who represented half of applicants (50%).

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<sup>5</sup> As of August 2006 the UK average is £199, 184 and the Northern Ireland average is £153,868, which places Northern Ireland 7<sup>th</sup> most expensive out of the 12 UK regions: Source: [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) 25.08.06

<sup>6</sup> Simon Community NI website – [www.simoncommunity.org](http://www.simoncommunity.org)

**Table 1:** Total number of single individuals presenting to Northern Ireland Housing Executive as Homeless, 2004-05 & 2005-06 compared

	<b>2004-2005 (number)</b>	<b>2005-06 (number)</b>	<b>+/- change (number)</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Total Presenting</b>	17,362	20,121	2,759	15.89
<b>Single Males</b>				
<b>16-17 yrs</b>	194	210	16	8.25
<b>18-25 yrs</b>	1,772	2,024	252	14.22
<b>26-59 yrs</b>	3,962	4,475	513	12.95
<b>Single females</b>				
<b>16-17 yrs</b>	306	312	6	1.96
<b>18-25 yrs</b>	1,441	1,579	138	9.58
<b>26-59 yrs</b>	1,324	1,514	190	14.35

The reasons provided by individuals for becoming homeless range from breakdown in relationships to previous accommodation being physically unsuitable (see Table 2 below)

**Table 2 Reasons given for homelessness: 2004-05 & 2005-06  
compared<sup>7</sup>**

	<b>2004-2005 (number)</b>	<b>2005-06 (number)</b>	<b>+/- change (number)</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Reason given</b>				
Sharing breakdown / family dispute	4,114	4,799	685	16.65
Marital / relationship breakdown	2,564	2,706	142	5.54
Domestic violence	727	798	71	9.77
Loss of rented accommodation	2,249	2,705	456	20.28
No accommodation in NI	1,684	1,941	257	15.26
Intimidation	959	888	-71	-7.40
Accommodation not reasonable	2,252	2,901	649	28.82
Release from hospital, prison, other institution	340	348	8	2.35
Fire, flood, other emergency	80	107	27	33.75
Mortgage default	230	318	88	38.26
Other reasons	862	1,086	224	25.99
Bomb, fire, civil disturbance	87	57	-30	-34.48
Neighbour dispute	1,214	1,467	253	20.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,362</b>	<b>20,121</b>		<b>15.89</b>

The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 introduced a series of changes to tenancy in NI including powers for social landlords to evict and to exclude some people in housing need from entitlement to social rented

<sup>7</sup> Statistics: Council for Homeless, Chainmail Issue 6.

accommodation in Northern Ireland.<sup>8</sup> A concern of some in the housing sector is that these measures have contributed to the increasing levels of homelessness in Northern Ireland. In addition the legislation fails to recognise the specific needs of young single people who are not identified as a priority target group.

### **Education, Care and Homelessness**

Vulnerable groups to homelessness include those who have recently left care, with research indicating that almost a quarter (23%) of young care leavers were homeless during the 6-month period immediately after leaving care.<sup>9</sup> Combined with this is the fact that 75% of young people leaving care have no qualifications, ensuring that their employability prospects are extremely limited.<sup>10</sup>

At 31 March 2005, there were 2,531 looked after children in Northern Ireland, a rate of 56 per 10,000 children aged under 18. Comparative figures in the UK are 55 in England, 106 children in Scotland and 65 children in Wales. The numbers of children placed in residential care in Northern Ireland increased by 11.2% from 285 in 2000 to 317 in 2005.<sup>11</sup>

### **Employment and Unemployment in Northern Ireland – Levels and Issues**

In Northern Ireland there are an estimated 733,000 persons of working age in employment. This figure has increased by 9.7% (65,000 persons) during the last five years and is the highest figure on record. Against this Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of economically inactive persons of working age who identify sickness or disability (33%) as the main reason for not wanting work, compared to the UK (28%).

Northern Ireland also has a higher percentage of economically inactive that do not want a job who are students (28%) compared to the UK (21%). This is partly a reflection of the younger population in NI.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.housingrights.org.uk/policy/>

<sup>9</sup> Queen's University, Pinkerton and McCrea, 1999

<sup>10</sup> Department of Health, 1999

<sup>11</sup> Children Order Statistical Bulletin, 2005

<sup>12</sup> [www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)

## Barriers to Employment for People Who Are Homeless

The difficulties faced in gaining employment are complex and varied, and include<sup>13</sup>:

- Low levels of educational attainment
- Poor levels of school attendance – including truancy and disruptive behaviour
- Lack of employment available in certain geographical areas and in certain industry sectors
- Poor public transport provision and routes in certain parts of Northern Ireland

There are also a range of difficulties regarding accessing and sustaining participation in Government run training schemes, e.g. New Deal and Jobskills. Barriers here have included<sup>14</sup>:

- Too strict and do not allow for difficult to settle young people
- 6 months New Deal does not give enough time to complete NVQ's (the relevant qualifications)
- £40 per week allowance is not enough to live on – this actually works out at less when trainee's contribution to travel is deducted
- Lack of placements available for trainees
- Variety of training and qualifications is limited and may also not be set at high enough a level for many trainees.

## Voluntary Sector and Homelessness

In Northern Ireland there are a range of voluntary organisations whose remit includes dealing with homeless and housing issues (e.g. the Council for the Homeless, Shelter, Housing Rights Service, Foyer, and the Simon Community). In this section we look briefly at the role of the Simon Community before considering the specific role of Foyer in Northern Ireland.

The Simon Community<sup>15</sup> was first established by Anton Wallich-Clifford in London in 1963. In his work with offenders and those on probation,

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<sup>13</sup> Draft paper on homelessness and social issues, Fiona Boyle, August 2006

<sup>14</sup> Draft paper on homelessness and social issues, Fiona Boyle, August 2006

Wallich-Clifford saw many people re-offending because they had nowhere to stay. In setting up the first Simon Community in his own home, he aimed to draw public attention to the needs of homeless people and to develop an experimental approach to their care and support. Simon Community Northern Ireland was formed in 1971 and currently has accommodation and support units in 18 sites across Northern Ireland. Simon Community Northern Ireland believes that everyone has a fundamental right to a home and actively responds to the needs of homeless people through initiatives aimed at prevention, provision and progression to independent living.

The concept of homelessness – as more than not having a roof – has heralded the development of a range of programmes by Simon Community to break the cycle of homelessness, addressing needs other than the lack of housing. These include health programmes to address alcohol management, physical well being and looking at promoting positive mental health within its resident group. Examples of these include group work on teenage pregnancy and parenthood, and healthy eating.

### **The Foyer Model**

The UK Foyer network<sup>16</sup> was launched in 1992 and presently links over 130 local Foyers supporting more than 10,000 homeless 16 to 25 year-olds each year, giving them a chance to realise their full potential. Foyers enable young people at risk to escape the 'no home-no job-no home' cycle by delivering a holistic service that integrates accommodation with training, job search, personal support and motivation. Foyers address a complex range of needs experienced by disadvantaged young people who face difficulties by providing suitable accommodation and access to relevant training opportunities on site.

The primary aims of Foyers are to:

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.simoncommunity.org/about\\_us/our\\_history/](http://www.simoncommunity.org/about_us/our_history/)

<sup>16</sup> [www.Foyer.net](http://www.Foyer.net)

- Establish safe and affordable accommodation in the UK's most deprived urban and rural communities, including many inner-city areas
- Support over 5,000 disadvantaged and homeless 16 to 25 year-olds each year, plus a further 5,000 non-residents. Most are further disadvantaged through abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, truancy or school exclusion, crime and unemployment
- Deliver a holistic training programme which enables each young person to achieve social and economic independence through access to education, training and employment opportunities.

Foyers originated in France after the Second World War, when large numbers of rural workers came into the cities and towns to rebuild them after the destruction wrought by the war. They evolved into projects for young workers, with a population also including students and unemployed young people. The idea was brought to the UK in the early 1990s by Grand Metropolitan and Shelter, with more of a focus on disadvantage and homelessness, but maintaining the original French concepts of the balanced community and 'brassage' as far as possible.

Foyers are funded in a huge variety of different ways. The most popular is via partnerships with local Housing Associations, colleges, and businesses. European funding also plays a part as well as specific projects being funded by mainstream Government money (e.g. the UK Online centres, Basic Skills agency grant). Up until 2005 GB Foyers received funding from the Learning Skills Council. This funding included an allowance of up to £1,700 per resident which could then be used for accessing courses via the local Further Education College and/or funding staff posts within the Foyer.

Foyer is an UK wide umbrella body linking operational and developing Foyers together. Its brief is to influence Government policy better to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people, to promote Foyers and their work to key stakeholders, to ensure that good practice and innovation is shared, to secure funding for Foyer work and to ensure the quality of Foyer work through the Foyer Accreditation System. It is funded through

grants awarded by charitable trusts and foundations, corporate partners, Government, the National Lottery and other sources, and through income generated by the Accreditation scheme, membership (a fraction of our actual operating costs), and a certain amount of core cost built into funding bids for Foyers.

The Foyer's unique approach to the provision of accommodation aims to break the cycle of homelessness, to promote social inclusion and to allow young people to create their own opportunities in employment, training and education. The accommodation contract offered is very much tied to a level of activity in training, employment and/or education. The Foyer aims to offer a holistic service to develop each resident to the point where they can move to their own accommodation with greater self-esteem, employment or qualifications, an awareness of the services available to them in the community and improved independent living skills.

### **Foyers in Northern Ireland**

There are currently three accredited Foyers in Flax Foyer (Crumlin Road Belfast), Strand Foyer (Derry) and Belfast Foyer (Malone Road, Belfast).<sup>17</sup> In Northern Ireland whilst capital funding for Foyers was provided through central government (DOE, DSD) each Foyer had to raise funds for any revenue costs, including funding for resources such as training suites for residents, as the funding from central government focuses on providing residential facilities. As a result each individual Foyer had to seek project specific funding for training activities from a variety of sources (e.g. Lottery, Peace I and II).

The Engage Programme aims to build upon the Foyer model to identify and produce new methods of developing the skills base of homeless people and encouraging re-integration with the workforce. The Foyer schemes provide an excellent platform for the implementation of this programme, given that the residents are required to demonstrate a commitment to training and development as a condition of their accommodation within the units. To fund these proposals it applied to the EQUAL programme in 2004 for a pilot programme across four sites.

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<sup>17</sup> Lurgan Foyer is also affiliated to Foyer

## What is EQUAL?

EQUAL<sup>18</sup> is part of the European Union's strategy for more and better jobs and for ensuring that no one is denied access to them. Funded by the European Social Fund, EQUAL tests new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job. These new ideas could change future policy and practice in employment and training.

EQUAL operates by bringing together the key players in a geographical area or sector. The different worlds of public administration, non-governmental organisations, social partners and the business sector (in particular SMEs) will work in partnership, pooling their different types of expertise and experience.

These Development Partnerships agree a strategy within which they will try out new ways of dealing with problems of discrimination and inequality which they have already pinpointed. Central to the work of each Development Partnership is its links with at least one partnership from another country and its involvement in a network of others dealing with the same theme across Europe. Ideas are being tested with a view to using these results to influence the design of future policy and practice

## Key Principles of EQUAL

The EQUAL Programme is a testing ground for developing and disseminating new ways of delivering employment policies to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by those seeking access to the labour market and those already within it. It employs a fresh approach to tackling those issues and besides the thematic approach, incorporates six further key principles: -

Partnership: EQUAL operates by bringing together key players in a geographic area or sector into Development Partnerships (DPs). DPs may choose one of the thematic areas and agree a strategy within which they try out new ways of dealing with problems of discrimination and inequality. Each DP must be linked with at least one partnership from another

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<sup>18</sup> [www.equalni.org](http://www.equalni.org)

Member State. EQUAL funds activity under the following actions within each thematic field:

**Action 1:** Setting up DPs and transnational co-operation;

**Action 2:** Implementing the work programmes of the DPs;

**Action 3:** Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy.

**Innovation:** EQUAL tests and promotes new ways of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities faced by those groups most disadvantaged in the labour market, both those in work and those seeking work, in particular, discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and social exclusion. These groups include women, minority ethnic communities including Irish Travellers, people with disabilities, older workers, refugees, ex-prisoners, ex-offenders, drug and alcohol misusers;

**Equal Opportunities:** Equal Opportunities is a cross-cutting feature of the programme. EQUAL also includes action to help the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers;

**Transnational Co-operation:** Transnational co-operation is a central feature of EQUAL and links with a transnational partner are a requirement of participation in the programme. The transnational dimension ensures that lessons are learned across Member States and examples of good practice are exchanged;

**Mainstreaming:** EQUAL has been designed so that its actions inform policy developments and ensure that policy makers learn lessons from its activities. This concept is known as mainstreaming; and

**Empowerment:** In practice this principle means that those who are targeted for support also have an opportunity to influence the design and the evaluation of the proposed activities.

## EQUAL in Northern Ireland

The EQUAL Community Initiative Programme is positioned within the wider labour market policy context of Northern Ireland and aims to ensure that:

1. Employment opportunities are spread more equally;
2. Concentrations of unemployment amongst certain groups in society are reduced;
3. Long-term unemployment and inactivity are removed; and
4. Welfare dependency is reduced.

The NI EQUAL Programme has adopted two of the nine EU-wide themes as being appropriate to the needs of the NI labour market. The two themes are:

- Theme A - **Employability**: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market, which must be open to all;
- Theme H - **Equal Opportunities** for men and women: Reducing gender gaps and supporting job de-segregation.

Under Theme I, the specific needs of asylum-seekers in Northern Ireland are being taken forward on a UK wide basis by the Great Britain EQUAL Programme. The Engage programme is funded through Theme A, Employability

## Who's Who in EQUAL

The European Unit of the Department for Employment and Learning has the overall responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the EQUAL Programme in Northern Ireland. It is known as the Managing Authority (MA).

PROTEUS (NI) Ltd is contracted as National Support Structure (NSS) to assist with the provision of some of the more specialist Development Partnership support roles. The NSS is contracted to monitor Development

Partnership activity, assist with transnational co-operation and offer ongoing advice and guidance to Development Partnerships.

A National Thematic Network (NTN) has also been established. It includes representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sector and each DP. The National Thematic Network has four key roles:

- Adopting a strategic focus ensuring that EQUAL continues to focus on priority areas;
- Identifying, selecting and analysing good practice;
- Recommending projects for approval by Northern Ireland EQUAL Monitoring Committee in the 2nd round of EQUAL; and
- Developing and agreeing a dissemination strategy.

A North/South Steering Group has been set up to facilitate and promote cross-border co-operation. Chaired by the Special European Union Programme Body, the Steering Group involves both Managing Authorities, National Support Structures in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as well as the Equality Commission and the Equality Authority. In addition, a Joint Support Structure, involving Managing Authorities and NSS bodies representing Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England and the Republic of Ireland works to assist the co-ordination and standardisation of processes and procedures for EQUAL.

The EQUAL theme within which this programme has been funded has the aim of 'facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated'.

### 3. THE ENGAGE PROGRAMME

#### Early development

The need for the Engage programme arose out of a growing recognition by Foyer and the Simon Community that existing services for young homeless people did not fully meet their needs. As noted above during 2005-2006, a total of 20,101 households in Northern Ireland presented as homeless to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

A significant proportion of these presenters had previously been homeless, re-presenting to different service providers throughout Northern Ireland. This is demonstrative of the fact that existing interventions for meeting the training and development needs of this target group have not been effective. In particular, statutory interventions such as New Deal and Jobskills, as noted above, were regarded as inflexible and unable to meet the complex needs of young homeless people, although within each programme some staff reacted well to the needs of young homeless. However this was not a strategic-led response and no additional support was offered to those in need.

Whilst the Foyer concept has recently received more recognition, in the past this had not occurred. In addition they were largely vocationally based and not appropriate for those who wanted more academic based qualifications.

The development of the concept behind Engage was based on experience gained in delivering programmes such as the New Deal Core Gateway programme. This programme had been delivered in the Belfast Foyer and was primarily aimed at targeting clients that other providers had found difficult to deal with.

Whilst the essence of the programme was recognised as fulfilling a defined need, referrals from New Deal were not sufficient in volume to make the programme viable.

In addition DEL introduced additional restrictions on the programme, such as the need for an accredited Basic Skills Tutor on site which the Belfast Foyer was unable to meet at that time.

Evaluations of previous programmes combined with this experience pointed to the need for a programme which would improve motivation and self-esteem in the target group, a programme which would support residents through training, offer a series of short-term goals and lots of visible successes. All these are core issues which the target group had either not experienced in the past, or were currently missing from their lives as a result of problems they had encountered in their personal life. It was clear that a programme was needed that could deal with each individual as an individual, would help them articulate their aspirations and set out on the road to meet these dreams. Such a programme would also need to be highly flexible to meet the needs of the target group, to allow the target group to drop in and out of it when required and to provide support and space when appropriate.

The Foyers approach to client centred services, relating to young people, focusing on employment and training matched well with the needs of the programme. Existing funding from the statutory sector could only be used to provide support services but would not allow for funding for training programmes.

The Foyer in Northern Ireland, having consulted on the possibility of developing a programme to meet these needs, met with DEL to discuss funding a programme or a pilot programme. However DEL were unable to provide funding for a programme and thus alternative sources had to be identified. After considering a number of options the announcement of funding from the Equal programme clearly matched up with the requirements of the proposed programme. Simon Community then approached Foyer to discuss the possibility of submitting a bid. Given Simon Community's expertise in managing grants it was agreed that they would be the lead body in the application process. Extensive input was also provided by the Foyer network and federation in developing the application for submission to Equal.

Simon Community formally submitted the application to Equal in Autumn 2004 and were notified of the successful award of the grant in Spring 2005, at which point preparation began to recruit the programme manager, the programme administrator and then the programme officers for each location. The recruitment process, which was carried out both externally, and internally took four months to complete (June to October 2005) and necessitated the running of five selection panels. The selection process also incorporated the involvement of residents who were asked to participate in the process to contribute to their sense of ownership of the programme.

Short-listed candidates were firstly interviewed by a traditional-type panel made up of the Programme Manager, George Sproule, the Chair of the Development Partnership and Foyer representative, Fiona Boyle and the relevant Foyer Manager (Louise Montgomery for Strand interviews and Marie Fusco for all Belfast/Bangor interviews). Candidates were then asked to present their response to a scenario, which had been given to them in advance of the interview, to a group of 2 – 3 residents. Hugh McVeigh (Manager – Belfast Foyer) and Barry Smyth (Manager – Bangor Simon Community hostel) assisted in this secondary process.

Programme Officers were then appointed to their post in Autumn 2005:

- Stephen Kerr – Strand Foyer
- Mairead Mackle – Belfast Foyer (left September 2006)
- Sue Kale – Flax Foyer
- Dearbhla Holohan – Bangor Hostel.

### **Programme Aims**

The two central aims of the Engage programme are:

- To develop a sustainable model of best practice for delivering training needs for homeless people
- To enable Foyers to deliver training and employment opportunities to trainees (homeless people), developing transferable skills which will improve the employability of this socially excluded group.

There are three 'actions' within the EQUAL funding schedule. Action 1 involves the setting up of the partnerships, which was successfully completed between October 2004 and June 2005. Action 2 covers the main delivery of the activities the programme running from July 2005 - June 2007 and Action 3 involves mainstreaming and dissemination activities and runs from July 2005 – September 2007.

The Engage programme operates on 4 sites: Flax Foyer (Crumlin Road, Belfast), Bangor, Strand Foyer and Belfast Foyer (Malone Road, Belfast). A description of each site follows later in this section. An Engage Forum has also been set-up to facilitate joint activities between the four sites.

### **Structure of the Development Partnership**

Simon Community is the lead partner within the Engage Development Partnership, with responsibility for employing programme staff and managing the budget. Foyer have been involved at the outset in developing the programme.

The remaining members of the Engage Development Partnership are:

- Belfast Foyer
- Bangor Hostel
- Strand Foyer
- Flax Foyer
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)
- Learning and Skills Development Advisory Agency
- Northern Bank
- City and Guilds
- Open College Network NI
- Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland
- Social Security Agency

The purpose of the partnership is to bring together the private, voluntary and statutory sectors to develop a sustainable model of best practice to meet the training needs of homeless people. The initial concept of the programme was that "Engage will identify and produce new methods of

developing the skills base of homeless people and encourage re-integration with the workforce. The Foyer schemes aim to bring together accommodation & training/job search facilities for young people aged 17-30. They will provide a platform for the implementation of this programme, given that the residents are required to demonstrate a commitment to training and development as a condition of their accommodation within the units.”<sup>19</sup>

### **The Engage Sites**

The original application was to provide funding for the programme to run in the four locations in Northern Ireland -Strand Foyer, Flax Foyer, Belfast Foyer and Lurgan Foyer. However the Lurgan Foyer later withdrew. Rather than reduce the number of locations it was agreed to seek an alternative location for the fourth site, and the Simon Community Hostel in Bangor was nominated to take part in the programme. The Bangor hostel whilst having a similar target group to the Foyers provides different services to Foyers and tends to have shorter term residents on site. It does not require residents to take part in training and support services as the Foyers do. The addition of the Bangor hostel thus changed the dynamics of the programme.

### **Belfast Foyer**

Belfast Foyer opened in June 1997 and provides 42 units of accommodation for young homeless people aged 16 – 25. Sited on the Malone Road in South Belfast the Foyer is a short walk from Queen’s University and is well served by public transport, shops, banks and a post office. Belfast Foyer is located in a large extended Victorian House owned by BIH Housing Association Ltd. and managed by Simon Community Northern Ireland .

The range of services available include the following:

- 42 bed-sits, three of which have been equipped with disabled facilities. All the rooms are furnished and have en-suite shower rooms with their own cooking facilities and a telephone which can receive direct incoming calls;

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<sup>19</sup> Engage application to Equal fund

- A number of Common rooms and a Resident's Rep office;
- A laundry facility;
- Tailored programmes including the successful Belfast Forum Theatre programme employing NLP (neuro linguistic programming techniques designed to help residents achieve sustainable independence. Life-skills coaching and training includes assistance with budgeting, personal development, living skills and resettlement. Job search, vocational training and work experience placements are also available. Belfast Foyer is also a Learn Direct and BIFHE Centre (Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education);
- Partnerships with over 20 main providers in the education, training and employment sector;
- A computer IT suite with fast ADSL internet access;
- The Orchard café offering a range of meals and snacks;
- Conference facilities and meeting rooms, available for hire by external agencies;
- 11 full-time staff providing housing, key-working and learning support as well as administrative and night security roles.

### **Flax Foyer**

Flax Foyer opened in February 1999. It is located beside the former Brookfield Mill on the Crumlin Road in North Belfast on a community interface and within a small business park. Flax Foyer is a new build property with 38 bed spaces and is owned and managed by Flax Housing Association Ltd. The Foyer works with young people aged 16 – 25 years old, mainly from the surrounding Ardoyne and wider north Belfast areas, and in particular with those with higher support needs.

The range of services available include the following:

- 38 self-contained flats with living room/kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. Two flats have facilities for disabled residents;
- Whilst quite restricted in space the Foyer has a Common room, Laundry Room, Common Kitchen and an IT suite with six computers;

- Training programmes include action planning and basic skills, with other courses offered from time to time, e.g. Cook It programme, Art and Crafts;
- Training partners include North City Training; Top House, Shankill Road for Higher Force Challenge;
- As part of the wider Brookfield Mill site residents have access to a multi-media theatre and a restaurant and pub on-site;
- Seven full-time and one part-time staff providing housing, key-working and learning support as well as administrative and overnight staff cover.

Flax Foyer provides:

- A stable and secure community in which young people can support one another and achieve independence;
- Help with finding appropriate employment, training or education to make this possible;
- Training in basic skills and independent living skills;
- Help with finding permanent accommodation when the young person is leaving the Foyer.

Overall Flax Foyer focuses on helping young people with no home to develop skills that will help them to enhance their employability while providing a home and becoming a tool to defeat the no-home no-job trap. A range of support is offered in areas from basic reading and writing skills to domestic skills. If any areas of support are identified and the expertise is not available from staff then the Foyer seeks outside assistance from qualified professionals to provide this service.

## Strand Foyer

Strand Foyer opened its doors in May 1999 and provides 48 units<sup>20</sup> of accommodation for young homeless people aged 16 – 25. Located in the Strand Road area of Derry City the Foyer is very accessible to most of the main services available in the city centre. Strand Foyer is a new-build development owned and managed by North & West Housing Association Ltd.

The range of services available includes:

- 48 single person flats including living room/kitchen, bedroom and bathroom;
- Public facilities include - Derry Bytes (Computer Drop-in Centre), Foyle Awards Centre (Duke of Edinburgh Open Centre), Children's Express, Youth Life, Include Youth;
- Resident facilities include – Gym, interview room, conference room, job search area, recreational facilities, IT suite, common room, laundry;
- Strand Foyer offers a wide range of training and employment programmes including – action planning, vocational guidance and training, pre-vocational training, job search, work experience placements, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, essential skills, IT skills etc.;
- Training partners include the North West Institute for Further & Higher Education, the Foyle Award Centre and Derry Bytes.
- Eight full-time and six part-time staff providing housing, key-working and learning support as well as administrative and overnight staff cover.

The Foyer is an initiative involving partnerships between the voluntary, public and private sectors to maximise opportunities for young people in the community. Strand Foyer's vision is to do the following:

- Enable young people to achieve self-reliance and independence

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<sup>20</sup> When first built Strand Foyer had 60 units – 24 of these were shared. Due to the difficulties surrounding shared accommodation and recurring levels of voids these flats were converted to one-person occupancy in July 2004 thus reducing the overall capacity of the Foyer to 48.

- Provide advice and support to assist young people overcome many of the barriers that prevent them from learning and entering the job market
- Offer accommodation to young people for rent
- Provide a wide and varied programme of training and employment services to enable young people to develop skills and experience.

### **Bangor Hostel**

Bangor Hostel opened in 1999 and provides 21 units of accommodation for single residents aged 17-65<sup>21</sup>. The rooms are divided into five clusters, four of which contain four bedrooms, one of which contains one bedroom. One of the flats is fully equipped to meet the needs of residents with disabilities.

The range of services provided includes:

- Full-time staff and volunteers
- A link worker system for each resident to develop and implement an individual support plan
- Designated staff in areas such as mental health, addictions, women's issues, young people, training, employment, housing and citizenship
- Information and advice to residents and ex-residents
- Advocacy work
- Link to social services and other voluntary agencies
- Resettlement and tenancy support to residents moving towards independent living
- Assistance to move to other accommodation
- Recreational activities both on and off the unit.

### **Programme Management**

The day to day Management of the programme rests with Simon Community and specifically with the programme manager George

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<sup>21</sup> 16 year olds are only accepted by referral from Social Services

Sproule. His role has involved managing the grant, monitoring requirements from the funder and managing the programme officers. Each site has developed the programme in different ways to meet the needs of the clients on site, and also reflecting to some degree the skills and experiences of the programme officers themselves. George's responsibilities also include managing the relationship with the Transnational Partners (more of which in the next section) and seeking accreditation from City and Guilds for the Learning Power programme. This later task has been particularly demanding because of the time it has taken to process the accreditation, with the external verifier for the course having only recently been appointed.

### **Learning Power**

The ENGAGE programme uses a Foyer developed programme called Learning Power. Learning Power has developed from the work of the respected academic Guy Claxton, Professor of the Learning Sciences at the University Of Bristol Graduate School Of Education in the UK. Claxton asserts that if we can pin-point the way in which we learn something that we can then apply the same method successfully to other subjects. He believes that this concept of meta-learning should be applied to all age ranges to help them discover how they learn, whether that be through visual/auditory or written cues. Foyer used Claxton's principles to devise a training course for young homeless people, the Learning Power programme.

The aim of The Certificate in Learning Power<sup>22</sup> is to provide a framework in which centres can offer education and training to homeless and vulnerable people. It has been developed from "The Outside In" LSC Homelessness Sector/Foyer Project.

The framework has four phases with each phase defined by the circumstances and behaviours of the learner.

**Phase 1:** the learner is in unsafe and disorderly circumstances, which need to be stabilised.

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<sup>22</sup> C&G draft handbook

**Phase 2:** the learner wishes for an improvement in circumstances and is ready to try and move forward

**Phase 3:** the learner is in a stable and recovered home situation and is building the capacity to move forward.

**Phase 4:** the learner is confidently moving into a sustainable independent way of life.

The framework is made up of a variety of modules under the headings of 'me', 'my space', and 'what I do'. These have been designed for centres to focus on the individual needs of the homeless and vulnerable and to capture their capacity to learn and develop. The Learning Power Award is available at four levels from Entry Level 1 to Level 1, with modules from a number of Phases available at each level.

The modules are also designed for those working closely with the homeless and vulnerable to provide a structured programme within which to focus their work. They offer learning outcomes with clear guidance on how each outcome should be achieved and suggestions for different types of evidence which can be produced to show how the learning outcome has been met.

The Certificate in Learning Power focuses on the individual through their learning how to learn, and to take control of their learning.

The broad objectives of The Certificate in Learning Power are to:-

- respond both to the actual perceptions and starting points of all homeless and vulnerable people and their need to transfer and progress
- provide learning which is largely deductive and holistic
- develop provision on a collaborative basis in order to help grow the capacity of the individuals, organisations and sectors involved
- build on the evidence gained and the lessons learned elsewhere

- maintain current standards for good quality learning and provision

Modules 100, 200, 300 and 400 pull together the four 'Rs' of Learning Power<sup>23</sup>:

- resilience – being ready, willing and able to lock onto learning
- resourcefulness - being ready, willing and able to learn in different ways
- reflectiveness – being ready, willing and able to become more strategic about learning
- reciprocity – being ready, willing and able to learn alone with others

They have been designed to reflect on the learner's skills at various stages picking out key points in their development as a means of reflecting on the skills they have learned from the modules completed.

Each module is by portfolio evidence that is internally assessed, internally verified and externally verified. The Certificate will be awarded for a minimum of three modules, one of which must come from the 'me' category. Module certification is available (see overleaf for full list of modules).

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<sup>23</sup> See the work of Guy Claxton, in particular *Building Learning Power, Bristol: TLO 200X*

## Modules in the framework:

<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>
<b>Me</b>	<b>Me</b>
100 Me and my learning	300 Me and my learning
101 Keeping safe	301 Making myself understood
102 Being healthy	302 Caring for myself
103 How I feel and want to feel	303 My sexual health
104 What is special to me?	304 Me and drink and drugs
105 Who is special to me?	305 My physical health
106 How I am with others	306 Solving problems
107 Handling problems	307 Coping with changes in me
108 Coping with conflict	
109 Coping with change	
<b>My Space</b>	<b>My Space</b>
110 Where I want to be	308 Interacting with other
111 Having my own personal things	309 Helping others in need
112 Looking after myself	310 My and others' beliefs and views
113 Sharing	311 Understanding anti-social behaviour
114 People I live with	
<b>Things I do</b>	<b>What I do</b>
115 What I do and want to do	312 Working with someone
116 Managing my time	313 Caring for dependents
117 Having fun	314 Using my budget
118 Handling my own money	315 Budgeting your time
119 Learning something new	316 How big?
120 Building on a skill	317 Using different media
	318 Contributing to the community
	319 Being creative
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>
<b>Me</b>	<b>Me</b>
200 Me and my learning	400 Me and my learning
201 Keeping safe	401 Coping with violence
202 Being healthy	402 Coping with challenge
203 How I present myself	403 Handling conflict
204 How I feel and want to feel	404 Coping with loss
205 What is special to me?	405 Understanding discrimination
206 Who is special to me?	406 Conforming and challenging
207 How I am with others	

- 208 Getting help
- 209 Handling problems
- 210 Coping with conflict
- 211 Coping with change
- 212 Where I come from

### **My Space**

- 213 Where I want to be
- 214 Having somewhere that's mine
- 215 Having my own personal things
- 216 Looking after myself
- 217 Sharing

### **Things I Do**

- 218 What I do and want to do
- 219 Managing my time
- 220 Having fun
- 221 Handling my own money
- 222 Learning something new
- 223 Building on a skill
- 224 Giving support to others

### **My Space**

- 407 My rights and responsibilities
- 408 Living with diversity
- 409 Handling anti-social behaviour

### **What I Do**

- 410 Team working
- 411 Leadership
- 412 Supervising
- 413 Giving feedback
- 414 Motivating
- 415 Selecting goods

## Transnational Approach

As noted in the previous section central to the work of each Development Partnership is its links with at least one partnership from another country and its involvement in a network of others dealing with the same theme across Europe. The Engage transnational partners were firstly identified after an analysis of the EQUAL database which detailed all funded programmes and their areas of interest. The initial criterion used to identify potential partners was common interests based in large conurbations. A meeting in Berlin in March 2005 brought together 10 potential partners who attended on the day; the remainder took part by proxy. It was agreed that the group of 10 would split into two groups of those with the most common interested. The Engage programme was partnered with groups based in Malta, Sweden, Netherlands and Lithuania, collectively now known as the Munin Partnership<sup>24</sup>.

Meetings have taken place in, Amsterdam, Malta, and Gothenburg. A planned meeting in Lithuania for September 2006 has been delayed until later in the year. A bilateral meeting has also taken place between Engage and Outstanding (the Swedish programme) in Belfast.

**Table 4 Transnational Partners**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Partner organisation</b>
Northern Ireland	Engage
Lithuania	Lithuanian Youth Occupation Development Partnership
Malta	HEADSTART
Netherlands	Bonifatius
Sweden	Outstanding

The Transnational group have agreed to consider 3 themes for their work:

- Recruitment, retention & engagement of learners (including how to train staff to make the approach effective)

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<sup>24</sup> Source: monitoring reports to Proteus and Munin partnership agreement, appendix 1

- Embedding learning (how make learning stick, the roll of mentors)
- Use of ICT (led by Bonifatius )

A web platform for information exchange and posting papers etc has been developed and has been operational since December 2005 (<http://workspace.tca-munin.net/>). A programme to involve the beneficiaries in virtual exchanges and making contributions to the process via the web platform is also underway to help embed the cross nation focus of the programme.

The transnational partnership and the role of the development partnership will be reported on in further detail the later stages of the programme evaluation.

#### **Who is doing the evaluation?**

In December 2005 the Engage Development Partnership appointed Trademark to conduct an evaluation of the Engage programme. Trademark was established in late 2001 by a committed group of activists from the community/voluntary, public, and trade union sectors. We are an ethically based not-for-profit organisation which works towards social justice in which the principles of social justice, equality and pluralism are actively pursued. Trademark engages with a number of constituencies across the public/private and community/voluntary sectors delivering training, research, and evaluation on a range of related themes including peace and reconciliation, equality and good relations and human rights. In the following section we detail the methods and approach we have adopted in conducting the evaluation.

## 4 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### Evaluation Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the evaluation consisted of five key tasks –

- Design an evaluation framework, methodology and some of the data collection tools
- Design qualitative data collection tools and undertake interviews and focus groups with staff and clients
- Undertake ongoing analysis of data returns (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Produce quarterly reports to the Development Partnership
- Produce two interim reports (June 2006, March 2007) and a final report (a draft report for June 2007, a final report for September 2007).

Our approach in conducting the assignment is based upon an ethical approach to inclusion and consultation which seeks to respond to the needs of the client group and ensure that the process is one of empowerment and inclusion, rather than exploitative. We believe it is vital for all parties involved in the process of evaluation, in particular the residents and staff, to be actively involved in the design of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the programme. We have held 17 one to one sessions/interviews in which we consulted with Engage clients and four meetings with staff to obtain their views and opinions on the best methods of monitoring activities and assessing the impact of the programme.

### Aims and Objectives

This report is the first interim report for the evaluation, focusing on the pilot stages of the programme and covers the period from October 2005 to May 2006. The aim of this stage of the evaluation is to assess:-

- Have programme targets been met? Have the aims and objectives been met?
- What has been the impact of the programme to date?
- Based on the analysed data and information, are changes to the programme required?

## **Methodology**

To address each of these tasks the Trademark team employed five research methods comprising a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools:

- Desk research (review of programme files, analysis of monitoring data)
- Interviews with residents
- Case studies
- Interviews with programme staff
- Participant observation

The approach of using qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted in order to ensure that while the statistics from the quantitative approach provided an overall indication of activity and achievements, the qualitative approach would provide insight into the development of the programme and more importantly the impact of participation upon residents.

As outlined above, before beginning the evaluation proper we also undertook a detailed consultation with residents and programme staff to determine the best methods of conducting the evaluation. The majority of residents favoured one-to-one interviews with the research team although some also expressed interest in group sessions. Residents also stated that they are content for the research team to contact them whenever they have left the programme to ascertain longer-term impacts, with research methods including email and telephone calls where/when appropriate.

As a result of these consultations with residents we also provided cameras to a number of residents to visually record some of their experiences on the programme, not all of cameras have been used and so we expect to include these in the next report.

### **Desk Research**

We have reviewed programme files including the funding application and reports to the implementing body (Proteus) to assess evidence of need and the activities of the programme. All of these have helped inform our understanding of the programme.

Since the programme's inception Engage have implemented a monitoring system on all activities. This has included data to profile residents in terms of general demographic features such as gender, community background, and age. The database holding this information lists client details such as name, age and gender as well as information on their previous qualifications and current economic status. Data is also collated on the amount of time per quarter each programme officer spends with each resident as well as the Learning Power modules that residents are completing/have completed. We have recommended that when residents leave the programme contact details are collected to enable the tracking of respondents for evaluation purposes.

### **Interviews with Residents**

Seventeen semi-structured interviews with residents were conducted as part of the consultation phase of the study and an additional nine interviews were conducted to assess the impact of the pilot stage of the programme. The issues covered during the consultation phase ranged from preferences in terms of appropriate research methodology to apply, to their expectations of the programme. In the pilot stage the questions concerned their views on the programme and expectations of what benefits it would bring<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Copies of interview schedules are found in appendix 2.

**Table 5 Fieldwork with Residents**

	<b>CONSULTATION</b>	<b>PILOT</b>
Bangor	4 interviews	2 interviews 1 case study
Belfast	5 interviews	2 interviews 1 case study
Flax	4 interviews	2 interviews 2 case studies
Strand	4 interviews	3 interviews 2 case studies

### **Case Studies**

Six case studies were conducted with residents. These entailed reviewing the residents' portfolios, discussing Rickter Scale data with programme staff and conducting in-depth interviews with residents.

On each occasion the evaluation team visited the sites where we aimed to interview four to six residents, two of whom would be selected as a case study. This was obviously dependant on the availability of residents whose commitments varied from employment, education and training opportunities as well as other activities. Where possible, interviews have been conducted at various times of the day to maximise availability of residents.

### **Interviews with Programme Staff**

Each programme officer has been interviewed once every four months using a semi-structured interview schedule to ascertain their views on the programme and its development, alongside discussions with the Evaluation Subgroup. We have also conducted interviews with managers at the three Foyer locations<sup>26</sup>. We anticipate more regular

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<sup>26</sup> Due to diary availability postponed interview with Bangor manager has not yet occurred.

meetings with programme staff (now monthly) and site managers (quarterly) to occur in the final year of the programme.

### **Participant Observation**

To help inform the research team's understanding of the programme and the dynamics of the relationships between residents and programme staff, Trademark staff also attended two sessions of the Engage Forum and a meeting of the Development Partnership.

### **Rickter<sup>27</sup>**

The Rickter Scale<sup>®</sup> is an innovative hands-on assessment and evaluation tool. Its effectiveness stems from the fact that it is -

- Easy to administer.
- Instantly engages the client.
- Helps to overcome communication barriers.
- Produces quality information in a short period of time.
- Profile immediately available for action planning.
- Offers standardisation.
- Provides adaptable initial assessment, monitoring and evaluation information.
- Helps identify appropriate support.
- Adapts to different client groups/needs.

All programme staff have been trained on the use of the Rickter Scale<sup>®</sup> (list of issues which residents rate from 0 -10) and currently employ the Rickter Life Board with residents at the early stages of working with them and at regular intervals after that to measure any changes. Programme officers did spend some time developing a specific Board for the Engage programme but later decided to use only the Life Board with residents, rather than both. Support staff at each site have also been trained on using the Rickter Scale<sup>®</sup> bringing the total number of staff trained on Rickter to 15.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.rickterscale.com/0101.htm>

### **Challenges in conducting the evaluation**

Our approach to conducting evaluation is based upon a strong ethical base which ensures that empowerment and trust building are at the forefront of the planning process. We have attempted from the start to build relationships with the programme officers and the Engage team as a whole and to evidence our commitment to conducting a robust and fair evaluation. It is important that our team members, where possible, meet with the same Engage staff on a regular basis in order to allow for a longitudinal and progressive conversation to happen. We hope that this approach allows for the process to become a conversation between people about the programme rather than a formalistic interview between two organisations.

We have attempted, with the assistance of the programme workers, to conduct a similar approach to talking with residents, though naturally this has been more complex and problematic. There have been a number of occasions when appointments have been shifted or cancelled, however due to the nature of the programme we are aware of the genuine difficulties faced by the Foyers and hostel and recognise our need to remain flexible.

## 5. KEY FINDINGS

As part of the pilot evaluation we held a number of interviews and focus groups with staff and residents in order to gain some insight into the early stages of programme implementation and its impact. The following is a reflection of some of the thoughts and feelings of staff and residents.

### **Development of ENGAGE**

The Engage programme was initially developed through a partnership between Foyer and the Simon Community. In reflecting on the development period it is clear that the combination of the ethos and experiences of both organisations formed a sound basis from which the application to EQUAL was made. As to be expected in building any partnership some difficulties and challenges occurred. It took considerable time and some intense discussion to establish what role each partner had to play in the DP as there were differing perceptions depending on each organisation's standpoint, but these roles have been better clarified as the partnership evolved.

The Simon Community as lead partner has assumed responsibility for the day to day running of the programme, a task which has been challenging given the intensity of monitoring by the implementing body, Proteus. In addition changes in senior personnel have seen three different line managers for the programme manager to date. This has undoubtedly had an impact on relationship building and knowledge.

### **The Development Partnership**

The following comments reflect views expressed to the evaluation team on some notable issues with regard to the Development Partnership (DP), however it should be noted that at this stage we have not sought the views of all DP members on its role and impact and intend to do so in the next stages of the evaluation.

The dynamics in the DP have undoubtedly been affected by its membership, which some felt was over-representative of the Simon Community. The multiplicity of partners has been complex to manage. It is clear too that whilst those on the partnership had common interests that these interests at times ran in parallel to each other rather than as a collective synergy. Changes in personnel from representative organisations have caused some delays within the workings of the partnership as time was needed to allow new representatives to bed into the process. The representative from DEL for instance has changed five times over the 18 months during which the partnership has been in existence. In addition there is a concern that whilst individual members bring knowledge and experience and a degree of influence within their own organisation not all have decision making powers, and thus additional work on lobbying on mainstreaming and sustainability may have to be conducted by programme staff in addition to the work undertaken by the DP.

Those consulted as part of the interim evaluation acknowledged that many of the difficulties encountered in developing the programme and establishing the partnership were largely teething problems to be expected within developing and delivering a new style of programme. There was a general consensus that progress had speeded up in recent months and that the DP Away Day in Spring 2006 had helped greatly in re-energising members and refocusing the role of the DP. In particular the work of the various subgroups was seen as a very positive step forward and the inclusion of residents and an ex-resident in the best practice subgroup will undoubtedly help inform the work of that group.

### **Development of resident programme**

The resident programme has been developed on the strong foundation of the “The Outside In” LSC Homelessness Sector/Foyer Project in Great Britain. This is now called the Learning Power award. It has been designed to meet the complex needs of the target group, young homeless people to improve their employability.

The programme is unique to Northern Ireland and is highly innovative, given its strong focus on motivation, its flexibility and the fact that it compliments other training on offer to residents.

One of the key elements to the programme is the added value it brings to other training. It aims to provide residents with the skills to enable them to access further training, education and employment. The cross-over of skills and practical help such as resources for activities and programme costs all contributes to a multi-layered programme.

Consultation with two other Foyers in the UK and a non-residential site using the Learning Power model took place during Action 1 of the programme’s activities and was conducted by the programme manager. This phase also included detailed discussions with staff at Foyer head office on the Learning Power model.

Whilst the Engage Learning Power programme has been developed using a previous programme it has done so without enabling programme officers to consult with those currently using it elsewhere in the UK. As noted in the following sections this decision was taken by the programme manager to ensure that the programmes developed in each site were unique to their site and best met the needs of residents in each location.

### **Recruitment process for programme staff**

As detailed in section 3 the recruitment process for programme staff was carried out both externally and internally and took four months to complete (June to October 2005). In total five selection panels were held, each incorporating representatives from the Simon Community, each programme location and Foyer.

The selection process also incorporated the involvement of residents who were asked to participate in the process to contribute to their sense of ownership of the programme. After the recruitment process was completed it was agreed to ask all participants – staff, candidates and service users – to reflect on and submit their thoughts on the process. It was clear that the delays due to a limited pool of applicants and re-advertising/ re-trawling had been frustrating. However the inclusion of residents in the process had been extremely useful and allowed them an opportunity to be included in a key part of the programmes development.

### **Operation and delivery**

#### **Introduction**

There was a general consensus that the programme evidenced delays in its early stages but that in hindsight these were inevitable due to the innovative nature of the programme. There was general agreement that these initial problems had been addressed over the course of the pilot phase of the programme.

#### **Staffing structures and resources**

The different contexts of each of the sites within what is essentially a partnership programme proved challenging in the early stages of the process. Some of these initial delays and tensions were due to the time needed to embed new staffing structures across the partnership. In addition the different contexts within which each site operates also impacted the development and implementation of the programme in

terms of staff confidence in the programme and feelings of inclusion in the process of decision making. From the beginning the programme management was keen to ensure that the programme was not applied uniformly across the differing contexts of the Foyers and the hostel but was allowed to grow organically to suit the varying contexts. Whilst difficult at first this approach has increasingly been recognised as suiting the nature of the partnership.

Subsequently the different locations and varying resource implications of each site have influenced the ways in which staff has implemented the programme which have gradually become contextualised to the different sites.

In overall terms programme staff felt they had an increasing input and control over the approach used to implement the programme.

### **Motivation**

In conducting this evaluation it became apparent very quickly that one of the major factors in the successful implementation of the programme has been the ability of the programme workers and the programme itself to motivate the residents:

*Everything else in their lives improves if their motivation and self esteem improves*

It was also clear that the role of the programme workers is crucial in instilling this motivation through the creation of trust-based relationships:

*We focus on building up relationships with clients – my context is so different, my role has been more of a support role, not all the work that I do fits neatly into the course but building relationships is very important...*

*one client thanked me recently, said I made him feel special; no-one had ever made him feel special...*

In addition to recognising what success might look like it was clear from discussions with programme workers that there was a need to be realistic about what determines success particularly when faced with the level and complexity of problems faced by potential residents:

*In a lot of cases you're overcoming years of ingrained behaviour....a lot of times it's generational...*

*Constant issue of drugs– so cheap, plus the taking of prescribed drugs, and of course drink...*

*The clients here are very different, area has very low educational attainment, difficult to motivate clients, they ask “what’s it about, what’s the point?”...it’s a generational thing, divided communities, high unemployment...*

### **Use of Learning Power**

There has been some debate internally over the building of portfolios and the accreditation process as a whole. The view of the programme manager was that there should be an organic approach to developing the delivery of Learning Power within each of the sites and that this development would be in response to the needs and influences of each site and should not be influenced by the nature of the English programme. In the early stages the programme officers sought more structure and direction as their concerns were that the organic developmental approach might delay implementation. The geographical separation of sites combined with the site based development of the programme also meant there was less cross fertilisation of practice and perhaps a feeling at times that staff were re-inventing the wheel. Nonetheless whilst it did take longer to implement than at first planned it has meant that each implementation of the

programme is developing into a bespoke programme relevant to each site.

The delay in acquiring accreditation and the possible knock on effect this had for residents was an issue for both staff and management. Whilst the delays occurred as part of the processing procedures set down by City and Guilds some staff were frustrated by the length of these delays. It had originally been expected that the accreditation process would be completed by February 2006 when in fact this did not occur until September 2006. The quality assurance visit took place in June 2006 and the centre and scheme approval visit took place in September 2006.

### **Management and leadership**

The programme management has encouraged independence in terms of programme development and implementation. Due to the differing contexts and resources available some staff have sought more assistance in terms of programme development. This in turn led to an increasing awareness from the programme management of the need to remain flexible and responsive to the varying needs of the programme officers.

### **Financial**

As the lead partner the Simon Community has had responsibility for implementing and control of programme finances; the complex nature of the financial procedures for such a large organisation, the complexity of the EQUAL financial procedures, and subsequent delays in some decision making has led to some frustration within the programme which has demanded a faster response to activities on the ground:

*there is money in the budget but it is difficult to spend,  
procedures for drawing down money have yet to be*

*finalised which has caused some problems...people want quick fix, need immediate reward...*

Whilst clearance on financial procedures have subsequently occurred it is clear that any procedures that would quicken processing time for paperwork and decisions would benefit the programme. Members of the DP through the operational subgroup have discussed this issue with the Simon Community who have agreed to expedite the process.

### **Administration and communication**

The pilot stage of the programme has seen recognition of the need to have clear communication both between the various horizontal strands of the programme and the verticals structures. The e-briefing prepared by Engage administration in June 2006 was well received by DP members and we would recommend that future issues be copied to all those involved in the programme to help facilitate communication in the next phase of the programme.

### **Staff training**

The strand of the programme about which there has been most concern is the issue of staff training, some of which is contextual and some of which is related to the structure and timetable of the programme. There have been a combination of external and internal factors in the delay in implementing the staff training. Unavoidable changes to staffing structures and personnel led to some initial delays which were exacerbated by the time it took to develop the partnership with BIFHE who have now been engaged to deliver the training. Nonetheless the programme has not suffered from the delay and the staff training has now successfully begun.

The impact of staff training and its implication will be considered in detail in the next stages of the evaluation as to will the role and impact of the Transnational Partnership.

## **Achievements so far**

All those spoken to were pleased with the concrete achievements of the first six months and were genuinely hopeful of building upon them in the coming year:

*The team have got loads done in six months...establishing the programme and building good solid relationships with the staff and clients...*

*We've managed to keep the focus on a service to the vulnerable and homeless while also offering them concrete opportunities...that's a sound achievement*

*The residents programme has taken off mostly through one-on ones and getting to know each other and empowering the clients*

*Building people's confidence on a one to one basis has been an important process and key learning for me...*

*We've already seen some people going on and moving to outside training – easing in and taking small steps gently...*

*X who couldn't engage in any other training programme due to deterioration of his mental health would be off any other course by now...but he's still with this one...*

There was some initial scepticism from staff about the use of the Richter scale but the positive reactions from residents have encouraged a more open attitude to its potential.

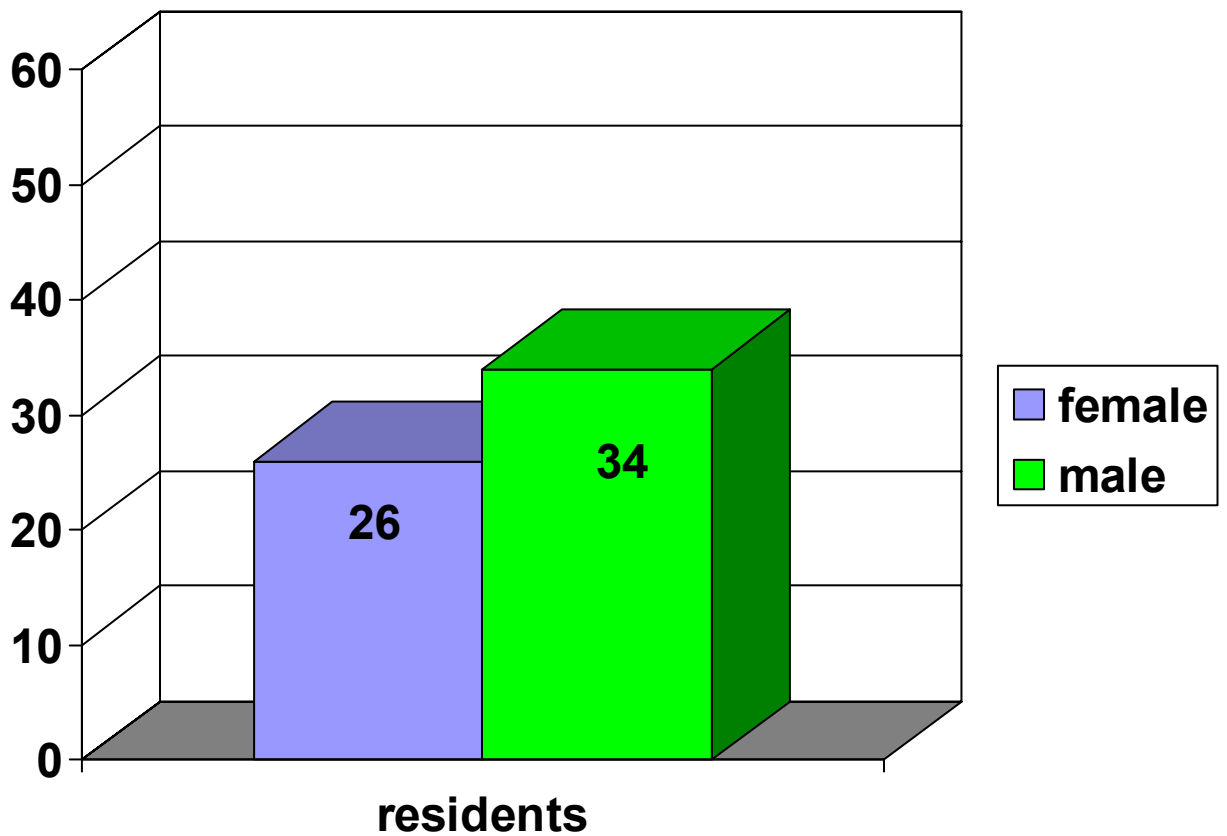
*I was sceptical, but yes it seems good, we have used the 'life board' and it's been good so far, we'll have to see if it works long term though...*

Having considered the findings in terms of programme development and delivery we shall now move on to examine the profile of residents and their views on the programme.

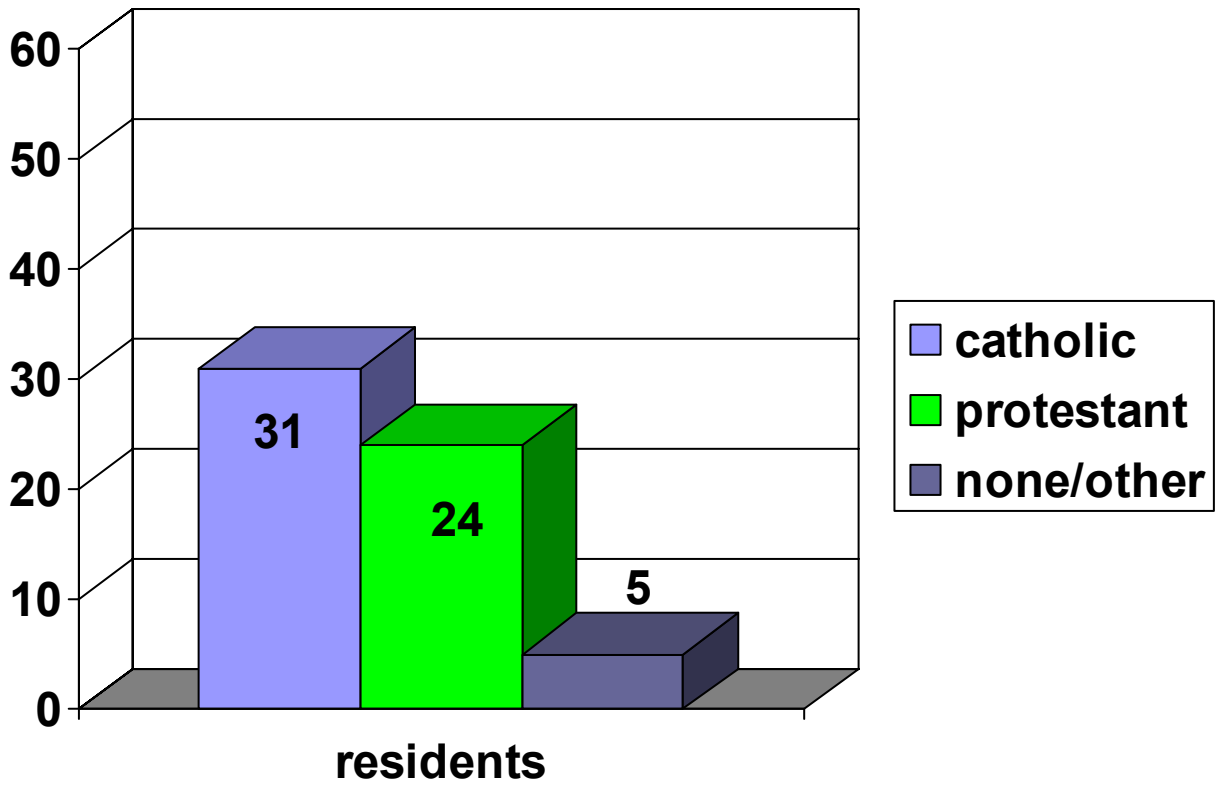
### Profile of residents

In this section of the report we present the monitoring data from the programme, beginning firstly with a profile of residents. Charts 1 to 4 below highlight the profile of residents in relation to gender, community background, economic status and disability.

**Chart 1 Gender**



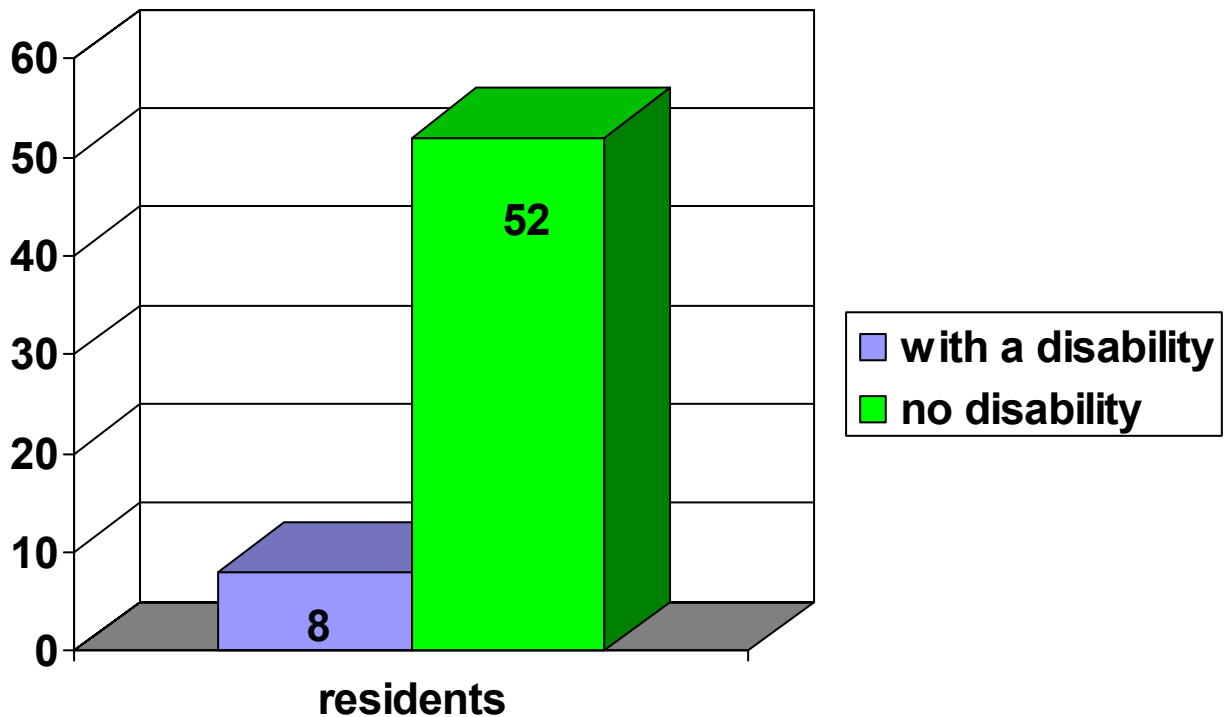
**Chart 2 Community Background**



**Chart 3 Economic status**



**Chart 4 Disability**



#### **Leavers**

During the period October 2005 to May 2006 12 residents left the Engage programme (3 females, 9 males). The majority of these left because they had been asked to leave the accommodation because of a breach of accommodation rules.

#### **Activities**

As detailed in Table 6 below a total of 81 Learning Power units have been undertaken during the pilot stage of the programme. Of these 6 are uncompleted following residents leaving the programme, 52 have been completed and a further 28 are currently underway.

**Table 6 Learning Power Modules**

<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Uncompleted<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Total</b>
My Sexual Health	-	-	9	9
Building on a skill	-	2	7	9
Being Healthy	-	-	5	5
Coping With Conflict	-	7	4	11
Having Fun	-	1	4	5
Being Creative	-	-	3	3
Coping With Change	2	3	3	8
Contributing to the Community	-	-	2	2
Handling My Own Money	1	1	2	4
Where I Want To Be	1	1	2	4
Working With Someone	-	-	2	2
Caring For Dependents	-	2	1	3
Coping With Loss	-	1	1	2
Handling Conflict	-	-	1	1
Handling Problems	-	-	1	1
Helping others in need	-	-	1	1
Me & Drink & Drugs	2	-	1	3
My Physical Health	-	-	1	1
Solving Problems	-	-	1	1
Team Working	-	1	1	2
Learning Something New	-	1	-	1
Managing Time	-	1	-	1
Me & My Learning	-	1	-	1
Using different media	-	1	-	1
<b>Total units</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>81</b>

<sup>28</sup> Uncompleted refers to modules started by residents who subsequently left the programme.

**Table 7 Modules completed**

<b>Number of modules completed</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>
1 module	33
2 modules	11
3 modules	5
4 modules	3
Total	52

The majority of residents have completed 1 module. On the basis of interviews with programme staff and residents it is clear that the variety of modules on offer is a clear strength of the programme. Residents are encouraged to take modules which best meet their employability needs and at the appropriate level. At this stage of the programme delivery it appears that the number of modules does meet the needs of the residents.

As detailed in Table 8 below the contact time between residents and programme staff varies from less than 10 hours in total to over 50 hours. It should be noted that this includes time spent on training activities, one to one sessions with programme officers, forum activities and a trip to Sweden for five of the residents. The figures below include residents who have been on the programme for a short period of time and also those who have been on the programme since its inception.

**Table 8 Contact time**

<b>Hours in total</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>
1 to 10 hours	25
10.5 to 20 hours	21
20.5 hours to 30 hours	8
30.5 to 50 hours	1
50 hours plus	5
	60

### Resident views

This section contains some early reflections of a number of residents interviewed throughout the pilot stage and is intended to give some more detail to the information contained in the case studies.

It was clear from discussions that there were a number of different motivations for engaging with the programme. For the majority there was a clear motivation to attend through the potential of gaining an accredited qualification:

*gave us something to aim for – more motivation, knowing that it would lead to a qualification cos it is now linked with Engage*

Others were motivated by the confidence and self esteem engendered through their participation:

*It's good for what I need right now...wish I could have done this type of thing earlier, I've always had low self-esteem...this is more than just for the sake of a qualification*

However it was also apparent that the process and structure of the activities were key to maintaining numbers and commitment, from the flexibility of the course through to the one to one tutorial sessions:

*Its flexible and there's no pressure...it's been good to get back on track, to have goals to work towards and to work at our own pace...it caters for all levels and some are really challenged by it but also enjoy it...gives you a sense that it's worthwhile...*

*The time factor has been good, been brilliant, it has allowed me to work at own pace, [programme worker] has been very helpful will meet on a one to one basis if needed.*

*It's not formal education, its everyday things, leadership skills...stuff I could use in future employment...*

The majority of residents spoken to were also happy with the content of the modules:

*I was attracted by modules not just because of the qualifications but coping with conflict in particular, I need to be more assertive dealing with conflict and learn life-skills...I found the research part very useful and can see potential for lots of applications to life...*

Where there were criticisms of the style of the facilitation and structure of some workshops it was generally from those who had experience of more structured educational courses:

*I didn't find it challenging enough – it needs a bit more work involved, not just workshops where it was most talking and listening, a course should be more than just that...*

The majority of residents were happy with the informal nature of group sessions:

*...its good craic...meeting with others, it improved my confidence... I wasn't sure what it would be like; the group work has been good...*

However it was apparent that this was dependent upon the skills of the facilitator; there were a number of criticisms directed at external tutors:

*The tutor just read off a sheet of paper, there was a bit of discussion, then some handouts...that's it...the tutor needs more knowledge, they did not inspire confidence...*

The use of the Rickter scale was generally accepted as a useful tool, but its long term applicability and usability will await further evaluation:

*The Rickter scale is handy, it will be good to use over time, its easy to communicate using it-*

*I done the Rickter scale...was told what to do but not why...seemed a bit pointless...*

However it is the level of support offered by the Engage workers and staff generally which is seen by the residents as the most salient characteristic in providing stability within the programme and confidence in their abilities to engage with it:

*There is always support, someone always around, even if the staff's not about, you can talk to others in the group...*

*They make you feel they actually give a shit...*

A member of Trademark staff also attended the Engage Forum. The main purpose of the workshop was to bring together all engage residents (Belfast, Bangor, Flax, and Strand) to generate ideas and to decide what they wanted to get out of the forum. The facilitator's were clearly experienced, creating a safe and warm and inclusive space and were clearly able to deal with diverse opinions of the residents and the various dynamics at work. A workable group contract was established through small group work and plenary feedback including a discussion on sectarianism regarding the wearing of potentially divisive football tops.

Whilst the pilot evaluation wasn't able to glean much more information about the development of the Engage Forum, it was considered to have potential as a learning and positive experiential process.

## RESIDENT CASE STUDIES<sup>29</sup>

### Case study 1

Paul is a 17 year old who has been living in the Foyer/hostel<sup>30</sup> for 2 years. He enjoys sports and is also a training to be a chef. He recently left his most recent post as the organisation he was working for refused to pay him any wages above the training allowance he was claiming and offered little in the way of training. He would like another post which will pay him and offer opportunities to train properly as a chef. He is happy with his current living arrangements.

Paul's baseline indicators when starting the Engage programme in March 2006 show that he was excited to start it and was keen to gain more knowledge. He identified the main barrier to previous learning as a lack of interest. He feels he learns best by hands on experience. His achievements to date included an NVQ and participation in sport.

Paul completed the Rickter Life Board in March 2006. He found it very useful, helping him to talk about a range of issues. Paul is currently preparing to do the 4 Peaks challenge in June 2006. To take part in this event he has to raise £500 and he is looking into different ways he can raise the funds with help from the Engage programme officer.

He has also recently applied to join a cross-border personal development programme. If he gains a place on this programme he has the opportunity to travel to Canada to help at a sports camp for children and young people. This particularly appeals to Paul because of his keen interest in sports and also because he would like to travel and to do community or youth work.

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<sup>29</sup> The case studies used for the pilot evaluation are not necessarily representative of all participants in the Engage programme as most of those nominated for case studies by programme staff had taken part in Engage Forum activities. Later reports will include a broader range of participants.

<sup>30</sup> Throughout this section of the report we use the term Foyer/hostel to refer to all four location to ensure that residents cannot be identified by the location they reside in.

*I think that would be just brilliant - helping kids of all abilities to take part in sport ... I enjoy being a chef but it's not the same, its not the same buzz when you help others, seeing the smile on their face*

Paul has worked on 1 module and had recently produced a Newsletter for the Foyer as part of his Engage portfolio “that was good; I had to go around and interview people about things”. Producing the newsletter helped Paul build on skills such as writing and communicating with others. The newsletter will be circulated around the Foyer/hostels.

Paul has also taken part in the Engage Forum:

*I am enjoying it. It gives me confidence in group situations. Before I started on the programme I would hardly have spoke to anyone, now I do anything, I talk to anybody, I don't care... I really enjoy the whole programme, it can be tiring doing activities on top of training and everything else but I am keen to keep doing things.*

Paul's aim is to get enough experience and new skills to help him move away from Northern Ireland:

*I would have been in jail if I wasn't in here, I would be stealing cars, sniffing glue. This place changed my life – it gave me chance to start new again... I want to end up on the other side of the world*

Paul believes that the support from the Engage programme officer has been vital in helping him “she is always there for me, she helped me, gave me incentives, help me reach my goals”.

Finally when asked what was the best thing about being on the Engage programme Paul replied:

*Just learning, getting me back to writing and computers,  
keeps me way from other shite that is the truth... its easier  
here, there's not as much stress*

## **Case study 2**

Joanne is an 18 year old who has been living in the Foyer/hostel for less than a year. She is currently trying to get on a New Deal programme to do childcare or business studies. She is involved in the Foyer/hostel Committee for residents at her unit. The Committee's role includes applying for money from the Big Lottery Fund to pay for activities for residents and to improve the Foyer/hostel building.

Joanne's baseline indicators when starting the Engage programme in October 2005 show that she was interested in the programme and was keen to gain more knowledge. She identified the main barrier to previous learning as a lack of motivation. She feels she learns best by hands on experience. Her achievements to date included a range of GCSE's and a business course.

Joanne completed the Rickter Life Board in October 2005. She found it very useful, helping her to identify things which she wanted to improve in her life such as "aiming for a career, rather than just a dead-end job".

Joanne has worked on 3 modules so far:

- Sexual health (Completed)
- Team working (25% of modules yet to do)
- Handling Conflict (almost completed)

She has also taken part in the Engage forum which she found:

*helped with team building activities, getting to know people, and providing feedback on what we want to get from the Forum*

Joanne described the Engage programme as something that she really liked:

*I am not a great timekeeper, there are lots of other distractions but when I am focused on doing Engage activities it makes you think about who you are, you see yourself in a different light, it changes your views on things, I used to be very against drinking but I am more tolerant now. I made me look at how I can handle things differently like conflict*

Joanne is hoping that her experience on the Engage programme will provide her with skills that potential employers will be drawn to and that on a personal level she will be able to handle conflict better in her relationships with others.

When asked “What is the best thing about being on the programme?”

Joanne replied:

*There is plenty of variety in the modules –lots to choose from.... also the programme is tailored to meet your needs – so it works in way that suits each client*

*The programme officer is doing great job, she has plenty of experience, and she is brilliant, very easy to talk to*

*It has changed my attitude, I know there is always someone worse off than me, and it has helped me understand why I made bad choices in past*

*It has made me look at what I want to do in life, I want a career, have my own family – and I will make the most of being here...I has helped me plan my future – it has given me space to do that*

*I know I am can't stay here forever, I need to get my act together, I am using the time here to get things straight, get ready for training and jobs*

*When I left school the only option was Tech, but I was not ready for that or employment, I did not like the Tech – there was no support there, I can work independently, but I have difficulty getting motivated, this programme is helping me with that.*

### **Case study 3**

Claire is 17 years old. She has been in the Foyer/hostel for less than a year. She has a casual job as a care assistant working a few hours a week but would like a more permanent post.

Claire has not yet completed the baseline indicators for the programme (expectations) but has gone through the Rickter Life Board which she found useful. She has completed the module “my sexual health” and is also involved in the Engage Forum:

*I have been to 1 forum activity, we did some stupid games – all about the forum itself, information on what we will do, what we would like to do that sort of thing, it was good*

Claire seems generally very happy with her involvement in the Engage programme:

*If don't understand anything I ask the programme officer, he is very good at giving advice and information, he is very easy to talk to*

*I am not doing this programme just for the sake of doing it, not like other programmes - I am learning new skills and doing new things. I am not sure what will get out of it, and that is giving me motivation to see what my involvement in it will achieve*

Claire hoped that her experience on Engage would help her job search skills and also help her with skills such as healthier ways of cooking and eating

For Claire the best thing about being on the programme was "Learning new things".

#### **Case study 4**

James is 21 years old. He has been living at the Foyer/hostel for over 3 years and has been involved in the Engage programme since the autumn of 2005. He is not currently employed or on any other training courses.

James completed the baseline indicators for the Engage programme in March 2006. He stated that he was not bothered about starting the programme, had achieved qualifications and courses in the past, learnt best by hands on and viewed his previous block to learning as his own abilities. He hoped to gain motivation from participation in the programme.

He has completed the Rickter scale in the past on another programme as well as this one, and found that whilst it was useful not all of it was relevant to him.

Modules completed so far include “where I want to be” and “my sexual health”. James found the first module particular useful as he is keen to have his own space and to have more independence.

He has enjoyed the Engage programme as it has kept him busy and increased his knowledge. His expectations of what he will achieve are “to gain proper qualifications from doing the modules, and to make new friends”

When asked “What is the best thing about being on the programme?” James replied:

*Having someone to talk to you, the programme officer is very approachable; it's great having him here. I have been on lots of other courses and the tutors just come here to deliver the training and then they are away again, this programme is not like that, the programme officer is here to help you 24/7*

### **Case study 5**

Zoe is a 25 year old who has been living in the Foyer/hostel for 6 months. She enjoys sports and is also a training to be a personal sports trainer. She initially found it difficult to integrate in the other Foyer/hostel users because of her age.

Zoe's baseline indicators when starting the Engage programme in March 2006 show that he was excited to start it and was keen to gain more knowledge. She identified the main barrier to previous learning as issues with anger management. She feels she learns best by hands on experience. Her achievements to date include completing physical health module, and Engage have been able to pay for two months gym membership for her to learn how different gym equipment works.

Zoe is currently undertaking a coping with challenge module and has also been enrolled on an external anger management residential which she is really looking forward to.

She also recently took part in the Partnership trip to Sweden which she really enjoyed.

*I loved the trip to Sweden, it was a real once in a lifetime opportunity to meet different people, and I was really surprised that they all spoke brilliant English. The icebreakers were brilliant and there was loads of mixing between our group and the others. We were really proud of our display boards and it helped us build our confidence with the other groups*

Zoe has worked on 2 modules so far; physical health and coping with challenge. She has also taken part in the Engage Forum meetings and has also enjoyed those.

*I like the Forum meetings; they help give me confidence in group situations which will help my confidence as a personal trainer*

Zoe's aim is to get enough experience and new skills to help her reach her goals:

*This programme is helping me improve my confidence and my hopes for the future. The staff are so friendly and approachable and help you with whatever you need*

Zoe believes that the support from the Engage programme officer has been essential in helping her "she is always there for me, she helped me, explains things to me and the one-one support is brilliant"

### Case study 6

Eilish is a 17 year old who has been living in the hostel for 10 months. She initially thought of training as a hairdresser prior to commencing the Engage programme. She also has a part-time job in a shop in her foyer/hostel.

Eilish's baseline indicators when starting the Engage programme in April 2006 show that she would like her motivation to be higher, and that she does not always recognise her own skills and strengths. She identified the main barrier to previous learning as a lack of clear goals. She feels she likes to learn new things but until she sets herself clear goals she was unsure of what she wanted to learn.

Eilish completed the Rickter Life Board in March 2006. She found it very useful, helping her to talk about a range of issues. After completing her Rickter Eilish set herself goals with the help of her programme officer, and has now decided she would like a career in social work. She has enrolled in the local College of further and higher education and is planning to undertake 4 AS Levels in September; Media studies, Sociology, English Literature and Psychology.

She has also recently applied completed 2 Engage Modules; Working with Someone and handling problems. She also helped prepare for the health awareness week in the hostel.

*I think that the Engage programme is brilliant – it gave me a chance to look at things differently, and sort a lot of stuff out. It has also given me the motivation I needed to go back to college*

Eilish has also taken part in the Engage Forum:

*I love the fact that I get to meet loads of new people through the forum meetings. It helps you realise that you are not the*

*only one with problems, and I don't feel so alone. I love meeting new people and having a laugh*

Eilish's aim is to get enough experience and new skills to help her become a social worker.

*I thought about being a hairdresser before I started the Engage programme. Now I have the confidence to go on and study to be a social worker. The best things about this programme are that it is fun, I'm learning loads and I'm going to get qualifications out of it*

Eilish believes that the support from the Engage programme officer has been vital in helping her "she is always there for me, she helped me realise that I could be anything I wanted to, and by helping me set my goals".

Eilish also took part in the study visit to Sweden

*The trip was amazing. I got to meet loads of amazing people and find out loads of stuff that is happening in other countries*

### **Enhancing employability**

The key evaluation question is has Engage programme had an impact on the employability of the beneficiary group? From the evidence presented in this section it is clear that many of the residents feel that their employability has improved. They have gained new skills in managing their own behaviour and in communicating with others. They are working towards qualifications which for many were something they struggled with when in mainstream education. For many residents the key factor in enhancing their employability is the motivation to engage

in training, and the programme has been successful in providing that. It has brought added value to other opportunities that residents have in accessing training.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Key Conclusions

#### Programme Development

The initial partnership between Foyer and Simon Community had witnessed some difficulties and challenges occurred, largely around the issue of ownership over the programme. The dynamics in the DP have also been affected by the view that it was over-representative of the Simon Community. The multiplicity of partners has been complex to manage and combined with changes to representatives on the DP its management has been at times resource intensive and challenging. The achievements of the programme despite these hurdles have been significant including an inclusive recruitment process for staff and a flexible employability programme to meet the complex needs of residents.

#### Operation and Delivery

There was a general consensus that the programme evidenced delays in its early stages but that in hindsight these were inevitable due to the innovative nature of the programme. There was general agreement that these initial problems had been addressed over the course of the pilot phase of the programme.

The delays in achieving accreditation had been frustrating for all involved in the programme. Some felt that greater transparency over the accreditation process would have helped ease concerns.

The context of each location in terms of facilities, resources and management support has impacted upon programme implementation. This is an issue which will warrant further attention as the evaluation progresses to document exactly how the outcomes of the programme are affected by each context.

The programme has been well received by residents in particular they have stated that the role of the programme officers has been key to enhancing their motivation. The flexibility of the programme has also worked well with residents allowing them to choose the type of module and level which best meets their needs.

In returning to the aims of the interim report as noted in section 4 we would conclude as follows:

- Have programme targets been met? **Yes resident numbers have been achieved with 60 participating in the pilot stage of the programme**
- Have the aims and objectives been met? **There was a general consensus amongst those consulted that whilst the aims may not have been fully met to date, that progress was being made to achieve these. All were confident that the model of best practice would be developed and implemented and that the employability of participants had been enhanced.**
- What has been the impact of the programme to date? **The impact of the programme has been to improve motivation of residents and to provide them with opportunities to enhance their employability. There has been significant uptake of modules and active participation in activities such as the Engage Forum.**
- Based on the analysed data and information are changes to the programme required? **The Learning Power course has generally been well received by residents, with the number of modules on offer and the number undertaken very encouraging. On the basis of the interim evaluation the number and type of modules on offer is appropriate to the target group. As noted below in the recommendation section some changes relating to operational**

**issues would assist with the running of the programme and the evaluation.**

## **Recommendations**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We recommend that when residents' leave the programme contact details are collected routinely to enable tracking of respondents for evaluation purposes (this occurs at present but is not consistent across all sites).

We recommend monthly evaluation meetings between Trademark, programme staff and residents and quarterly evaluation meetings between Trademark and site managers.

We recommend the continuing attendance of Trademark staff at sessions of the Engage Forum and the development partnership when appropriate.

### **Inclusion**

Whilst we recognise the refocusing of the role of the DP, in particular the work of the various subgroups, the programme should remain realistic about its level of involvement/achievement. Whilst DP meetings have been rotated around sites this has not always included DP members having the opportunity to tour each site and talk to staff. We suggest this occurs either in advance of DP meetings on particular sites or that DP members could be invited to an open day at each site on separate days or on a one day tour of all sites.

The inclusion of residents in management and implementation process has been extremely useful and has allowed them an opportunity to be included in key aspects part of programmes development; we recommend that this focus should continue.

## **Communication**

We recommend that future e-briefings be copied to all those involved in the programme to help facilitate communication in the next phase of the programme.

## **Transferability and sustainability of Engage**

Mainstreaming issues are at present been discussed by the DP members and programme staff. This has included considering various options for funding as well as consideration of who should be lobbied on the sustainability of the programme. The Housing Executive and the Social Security Agency along with DEL are key to making vertical relationships, looking at linkages regarding provision, promoting the message that the Engage programme can add value to what is happening already, can compliment current provision.

Discussions are also taking place about how the programme could be adopted to learning in the homelessness sector, including how to make horizontal relationships work. Focus includes how the Simon Community and Foyer can take on board lessons from the programme within the organisation. The focus being what needs to happen over and above what New Deal and Jobskills are doing at present, to residents to a point where they can take reasonable steps to employment. The Simon Community also have the opportunity now to offer the Learning Power course to other sites having acquired accreditation from City and Guilds as an approved centre. The responsibility for Simon Community is to make the course accessible to the homeless sector in Northern Ireland.

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Having presented the development and implementation of the Engage programme within this interim report the next steps in the evaluation process will include:

- Monitor and Evaluate staff training
- Assess the role of support structures (DP, Proteus, DEL)
- Assess the role of the Transnational partnership
- Consider mainstreaming and sustainability issues

## Appendix 1

<https://equal.cec.eu.int/equal/jsp/tcaView.jsp?id=3818>

## **Munin Partnership**

Secretary

UK-Northern  
Ireland Engage

[UKni-15](#)

DPs involved

Lithuania Lietuvos jaunimo užimtumo tobulinimo vystymo bendrija [LT-15](#)

Malta HEADSTART

[MT-1](#)

Netherlands Bonifatius

[NL-  
2004/EQA/0014](#)

Sweden Outstanding

[SE-65](#)

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## **A. Rationale and Objectives**

### **1. Common interests/methodology/underlying problem**

The transnational agreement has been formed as a result of the common understanding of inequality which exists within the employability field both in Sweden, The Netherlands, Malta, Northern Ireland and Lithuania. The transnational partnership is designed to allow activities and information to be disseminated in the partnership to address issues and promote awareness of the inequality which exists within employment to disadvantaged groups.

This transnational agreement recognises that “Outsider”, “Bonifatius”, “Headstart”, “Engage” and “Lithuanian Youth Occupation Development Partnership” have differing Development Partnership Agreements, and therefore different strategies and initiatives on how to overcome the barriers which exist to disadvantaged groups, within theme 1(A) Employability of EQUAL. This agreement also recognises that there is a different social and economic climate existing in each area represented. There is also a recognition of the different levels of financial support existing for all partnerships. However all partnerships have concluded which activities they will focus their transnational work plan on and work in cooperation with each other. The activities identified will bring added value to all Development Partnerships. Each activity will be consistent with the objectives of Equal and with the ultimate goal of improving equality within employability and mainstreaming these improvements at all levels of policy.

All partnerships have concluded that the common underlying problems which exist

are the barriers to employment and inequality which face socially excluded groups. These disadvantaged groups are common to all countries. It is the intention of the transnational partnership agreement to form a mutual learning process to the benefit of all partners. This will be achieved through a series of information collection and exchange, training initiatives and comparison work between partners.

All of the DP's involved in this Transnational Cooperation Agreement are focused on improving the social and working opportunities by offering young people in the age from 14-30 years education, training or employment, thereby they can increase their chances for employment and the chance to play a fuller part in society. The target groups for all DP's are young people who have been in the criminal justice system, "drop – outs", who are substance misusers, are disaffected, 'at risk', homeless or outside mainstream training provision. With special additional programmes, social and other skills we will enable the members of the target groups in the process of (re) integration.

Three key themes work towards this goal:

1. To develop a personal programme (individual) for those target groups, providing interesting and challenging opportunities to young people with additional emphasis on developing basic and life skills.
2. Using the possibilities for working environments, or workplaces where good practice exists to develop the necessary skills to be successful.
3. Creating the space for these target groups through empowerment and by giving them the chance to make a new start in "life", reducing the risk of repeat offending behaviour, and a way into sustainable independence.

## **2. Lessons learned from previous relevant actions**

Previous transnational experience has taught us many important lessons. Well-functioning co-operation among partners from various sectors of society creates a good base for finding solutions to problems of exclusion from working life and an effective role in society. Developing effective solutions and action models requires participation of relevant public, private and voluntary sector (non-profit) organisations.

Clearly set objectives, experimentation of measures, evaluation and learning from international co-operation establish a base for achieving good results, which then will be disseminated and mainstreamed horizontally and vertically.

The transnational partners must have common goals. The shared goal for our partners is clear – increasing and developing the skills of young people. The partnership recognises that we all work with a similar client group and we seek to achieve this goal through similar targeted training and work placement opportunities.

- Roles and responsibilities should be clearly set out
- Partnership should have a clear and effective management
- Good communications must be established

- Good operational benefits
- Good strategic benefits

The transnational work will be centered on task groups. One partner will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of each task group from the start. The lead partner will be responsible for ensuring that activity is carried out and milestones are met. The task groups will meet every six months during the time of the project.

The task group work will be managed by project leaders. Every partner will be required to participate in project decision taken by leaders, to ensure that all partners have an equal responsibility and involvement in the overall project. The project leaders will meet five times during the life of the project.

The project will use one working language and to avoid confusion, all written communications will be clear, concise and avoid any unnecessary jargon.

Meetings will be rotated between partners as much as possible (and within budget constraints) to ensure that partners have equal access to host and manage meeting in their own country.

The work plans of all partners emanated completely from knowledge and analysis of needs over years of representing excluded groups and combating discrimination.

### **3. The common objectives of the DPs**

The common objectives of the participating Development Partnerships in the Transnational Cooperation agreement will include:

ensuring that partner• members identify and establish high quality and appropriate recruitment, assessment, engagement and retention methods for all project beneficiaries and explore the possibilities for parallel working and development of innovative programmes

finding innovative and constructive ways of incorporating• social basic and life skills into interesting and engaging project programme activities for young people to develop competencies that will enhance their employability and independence, and in so doing overcome barriers to their participation in employment and training

ensuring that project staff• and service users develop ways of sharing both teaching and learning materials and good working practice. The DPs will evaluate materials & practice and the DPs individual experiences of using them. The projects will also use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to engage beneficiaries in both learning and vocational training opportunities.

To influence policy at• all levels on a Regional, National and European level on

equality and equal opportunities issues.

#### **4. The (common/complementary) products/deliverables foreseen**

Best practice model and toolkit (CD, booklet, etc - depending on country )• for recruitment, assessment, engagement and retention of the target group

Examples and models of jointly developed methods of embedding• basic, social and employability skills into interactive and inspiring work/occupation programmes for beneficiaries

Innovative models that• involve target group beneficiaries in planning, developing, implementing and monitoring programmes

A website hosting to encourage ideas• exchange.

Virtual competence centre – a virtual ideas exchange and• materials repository

At the end of 2007 to develop an DVD/CD to show• the results

#### **5. Added value on the strategy and intended results of each of the DPs involved**

The partners in the transnational partnership are able to offer expertise from their experiences from their own countries and specific niche work with the general target group of young people who have been or are at risk of offending. The range of knowledge across the partnership will allow us to share that knowledge, exchange expertise, materials and practical advice, allowing a much more holistic approach to developing and preparing disadvantaged young people for the world of work, and a better start to integrating into a wider social context.

Recruitment, Engagement and Retention/Trainer and facilitator programmes

The DP Bonifatius contributes its knowledge to help the students to find their appropriate qualifications and skills by testing their interests and capability's. It is also experienced in diversity of train-the-trainer programs

DP Outsider has experience and expertise in methods how to meet disadvantaged young people on probation or drop-outs from the school-system. We have experience in training and working with facilitators from the same ethnic and social groups that the beneficiaries emanate from.

DP Engage has experience and expertise in the design and delivery of staff development programmes through the involvement of both Government and voluntary agencies. It also has experience gained from practice and research

within the UK Foyer movement and other allied statutory and voluntary organisations in crafting programmes designed to maximise learning opportunities for young people.

DP Lithuanian Youth Occupation Development Partnership can contribute into this transnational partnership its knowledge it has as a non governmental youth organization dealing with youth occupation issues.

The field of disadvantaged youth occupation suffers from the absence of analysis, results comparison and policy making and promoting an integrated development of the local territory.

Lithuanian Youth Occupation Development Partnership aims to realise a congruous and complete analysis of the local territory; the researches will be based on the needs and demands of the target groups in the labour market.

#### Embedding basic skills

The DP Bonifatius contributes its knowledge which it has as a vocational institute

Life skills & independence building for service users are significant parts of the work of the members of the Engage DP and the partnership will contribute its experience & expertise in this area.

DP Outsider will contribute with its experience in training disadvantaged young people in democratic methods to make them able as a group to influence their own situation.

#### ICT

The DP Bonifatius contributes its knowledge which it has of practically oriented vocational ICT education and also which it has obtained in lots of projects in this field for example the NOFCOM project in which young students practice their knowledge by being a helpdesk and creating DTP and Websites

### **6. Added value and financial viability of associated partner(s)**

Not relevant to this TCA

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## **B. Work Programme & Working Methodology**

### **1. Transnational activities foreseen**

#### **a. Overall transnational strategy**

The main focus of this partnership is to improve the future prospects of young people who have been or are at risk or disadvantaged as a result of offending, homelessness, “dropping – out” from education system, using psychotropic substances or disaffection with mainstream training & education provision.

The learning that all partners gain from this transnational partnership will provide us individually and equally with more knowledge and experience of ways in which we can work better and more effectively with the target groups. It will provide us with a further opportunity to examine the similarities and differences of the main barriers to the group we work with, and the measures in place in the various member states.

By organising our work programme into task groups, each member state will be able to provide individual professional input into each activity, thereby allowing the most effective approach to dealing with the problem and imparting relevant information.

The task groups will all feedback to the project leaders meeting to ensure that there is direction of each task group, and so that information can be fed back to all levels, and also to collate information for dissemination.

The practitioners within the task groups will provide project leaders with written progress reports on a bi-monthly basis to ensure that identified tasks are progressing in line with work plans. This will facilitate clarity and focus of the individual task to be completed prior to the 6 monthly transnational progress meeting.

Task groups will meet on five occasions during the life of the programme, and project leaders will meet five times to review the work of the task groups.

## **b. Typology of activities**

Transnational activities intended	Rating
Exchange of information and experiences	***
Parallel development of innovative approaches	**
Import, export or adoption of new approaches	**
Joint development	**
Exchange of trainees/trainers/staff	***

## **c. Description of the activities/tasks**

Name of the activity	Description
<a href="#"><u>1. Taskgroup - Recruitment, Engagement,</u></a>	Lead Partner: Lithuania Key Objective: A major problem facing organisations working with young people is the appropriateness of the person to be on

## Retention/Trainer and facilitator programmes

the programme, and the relevance of the programme for the young person. When beneficiaries are referred to projects a major problem is finding ways to keep them engaged, and motivated to succeed and complete the project (retention) Main activities: This group will look at the various different methods in use across the member states and how and why they tend to work for specific beneficiary groups. The possibility exists for successful methods to be trialed and/or modified in partner projects and reports produced outlining methods that prove to be successful. This group will also look at the various different methods for training staff and facilitators across the member states Outputs: A range of useful tools or methods used to engage and retain beneficiaries on projects. A package of interventions which are known to work with information provided about best practice and 'fit for purpose' information.

## 2. Task group – Embedding Learning Activities – Social, Work, Basic and life skills

Lead Partner: Northern Ireland Key Objective: Keeping beneficiaries engaged and interested while at the same time learning fundamental concepts is a problematic issue for all partners. One of the key engagement and retention incentive for beneficiaries is to engage them in interesting and motivating activities, whilst developing methods that allow incidental and informal learning to take place. Enabling learning which creates long term and sustainable change through interesting and innovative activities is of key importance to all partners. The importance of the beneficiaries gaining power over their own lives and learning is a necessary and important focus in the achievement of this objective. Main activities: Partners will contribute to exploring and identifying methods that work in practice across member states. Members will be encouraged to trial existing successful methods from other partners who have used programmes and interventions which have produced good results and outcomes. With the support of the task group actions, partners will have the opportunity to modify existing materials to better suit their target group or situation. Comparing and sharing ideas and methods will be of significant importance to the partners, and meetings will focus on practical implementation techniques and feedback of demonstrated experiences. The involvement of the beneficiaries at all stages in the process as a means of their empowerment and helping the learning 'take root' will be encouraged amongst partners as a model of good

practice. The initiative, creativity and comment from the young people can inform and add much authority to the task group's considerations. Outputs: a 'what-works' guide to successful approaches to embedding social, work and basic skills learning interventions into creative and innovative engaging activities for young people.

### 3. Taskgroup –ICT

Lead Partner: NL – Website Key Objective: ICT is a key feature of the individual DP's as well as the Transnational partnership. Young people need to have the opportunity to be engaged in new and emerging technologies as far as possible to keep up with changing emphasis on employability. By including technology in the development plan for young people it is possible to engage them effectively, and at the same time enhance the learning experience by building in action from task group 2 above. Virtual exchange of experience is also important. The target group, because of past problems (and possibly the nature of their offending behaviour) they may be precluded from participation in beneficiary exchange. The joint website will allow virtual exchange of experiences. Similar opportunities exist for exchanging learning and teaching materials from the practitioner's perspective. Main activities: 1. To create a website for the partnership where information, good practice and resources can be shared and disseminated; an on-line bulletin board will allow the partners to communicate; Practitioners will submit materials or teaching aids to a central repository with the opportunity to assess and evaluate their effectiveness. 2. To create a separate interactive website for use by the target beneficiaries to encourage and promote exchange activities between beneficiaries from the different member states. 3. To create a web-based resource called 'Chatrats'. This is a self reflective assessment and developmental tool that uses the learner's own life experience and culture to develop social competencies 4. Creation of a final DVD to disseminate reports from the partnership members. Outputs: the task group will produce, two websites, a final DVD; a central repository for capture analysis and evaluation of learning aids.

### 4. Auxiliary – Transnational Dissemination Conference

Lead Partner: Netherlands with Malta Key Objective: To disseminate the work and findings of the task groups to a wider audience of key stakeholders and policy makers across Europe. Outputs: dissemination

conference to be held in September 2007 (in Malta)

#### 5. Auxiliary - Evaluation

Lead Partner: Sweden Main activities: Evaluate the main activities of the task groups, the partnership and working methodologies. Outputs: Evaluation report of individual reactions to transnational working and overall evaluation of products and resources created by the task groups. Final evaluation report delivered November 2007 in DVD format.

#### 6. Project Leaders Meetings

Key Objective: Review the progress of the task groups. Manage the work of the auxiliary groups. Deal with crossing cutting issues such as financial arrangements, intellectual property ownership rights, working protocols. Project leaders will meet five times during the time of the project , 2 times per year separately (or with use of webcams) and once with exchanging of the target groups or coaches over 2 years life of the project.

#### 7. Trainer/ Facilitator & Beneficiary Exchanges

Key Objective To allow for trainers/facilitators & beneficiaries in each partnership to discuss experience and learn at first hand what happens within the member countries. Comparison and sharing of ideas methods and outcomes will be a valuable tool in developing these tools and methods for joint use. This exchange process will also play an important part in empowering beneficiaries and extending their horizons & skills. Exchange visits will happen once in conjunction with Task group/project leader meetings and at relevant times throughout the programme depending on partners' budgets and schedules.

## **2. Methodology for sharing information, results and working tools**

A website will be created which will contain all information relating to the project development, plan and structure. Task groups will be able to use the website to circulate meeting information, reports and drafts of work prior to publication. The website will act as a bulletin board for information sharing and exchange. A DVD will be created at the end of the project to disseminate final reports.

## **3. Time schedule for milestones, outcomes and events**

Task Group 1

Sep 2005 – Initial taskgroup meeting - set priorities for action and detailed workplan  
Mar 2006 – collect and review methods relating to assessment, recruitment, engagement, motivation and retention of beneficiaries into targeted training and learning programmes and make available to members . Also collect and review materials and methods relating to training of trainers and facilitators  
Sep 2006 – review methods, pilot and test most appropriate methods in local projects.  
Mar 2007 – analyse and compare outcomes from piloted methods across members; enabled through practitioner exchange  
Sep 2007 – findings reported to dissemination conference and report produced

#### Task Group 2

Sep 2005 – Initial taskgroup meeting - set priorities for action and detailed workplan  
Mar 2006 – outline and formal agreement of scope of suitable material  
Sep 2006 – identify, collect, collate and analyse materials and input from beneficiary groups, assess usability across borders, quantify impact of methods  
Mar 2007 – translate appropriate materials where necessary for use and integration into local learning environments, exchange of practitioners for increased learning  
Sep 2007 – findings reported to dissemination conference and report produced  
Task Group 3

Sep 2005 – Initial taskgroup meeting - set priorities for action and detailed workplan  
Mar 2006 – websites platform structure agreed, pilot and testing taking place. Joint website created, DVD workplan agreed  
Sep 2006 – Websites available for testing in partner projects and for use by students for exchange of information and culture.  
Mar 2007 – Ongoing work with joint website  
Sep 2007 – findings reported to dissemination conference and report produced  
DVD ready for proofing - complete by Dec 2007

#### Conference

Collection of outputs from task groups and evaluation  
September 2007 – Final Dissemination Conference

#### Evaluation

December 2005 – Evaluation structure to be in place  
Ongoing collection and analysis of evaluation material by quarterly questionnaire from Swedish partner  
September 2007 – Final Transnational evaluation report available.

#### Exchange Projects

March 2006 – exchange agreement in place between partners  
Mar 2006 – Jul 2007 exchanges between member state partners in agreement with project leaders after identified actions from task groups.

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## **C. Financial Provisions**

### **1. Breakdown of budget for each activity (%)**

	<b>Total</b>
LT-15	<b>6.6%</b>
MT-1	<b>1.3%</b>
NL-2004/EQA/0014	<b>52.0%</b>
SE-65	<b>28.4%</b>
UKni-15	<b>11.8%</b>
Total	<b>100.0%</b>

### **2. Arrangements for cost sharing and avoiding double funding**

Each partner will pay for their own travel and subsistence costs for transnational meetings

All other 'common' costs will be paid for by the partner hosting the meeting/leading on the activity. Where this cost could be burdensome for hosting partner (eg large visiting student/trainer groups) an agreed sharing of these costs will be calculated on a pro-rata basis from the visiting partner.

All partners will take steps to ensure that work conducted in a transnational context is not repeated in their national project, thus avoiding double funding of work from both national and transnational budgets.

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## **D. Organisational and Decision Making Arrangements**

### **1. Contribution and responsibility of each DP**

Responsibilities will be organised inline with the key elements of the transnational work. Each key element will have its own task group and each task group will have a lead DP who will be responsible for the running of that group, monitoring and reporting progress.

All DP's will be represented in the Project Leaders Group and all DP's will be represented on all task groups in person or by document exchange, although DP's will not be required to contribute equally to the outputs of the task group. DP's will be able to make relevant contributions and focus their attention on the most appropriate elements or task groups.

All partners/DP's will have access to all findings and learning results from the transnational partnership, regardless of their input.

## **2. Role and tasks of TCA secretariat and external expertise**

Responsibility for the secretariat function of the partnership will be that of Netherlands partner. They will have responsibility for ensuring that pre-meeting papers are distributed, ensuring that all working papers, reports and findings are circulated to all partners and information flows appropriately between task groups and project leaders meetings. The secretariat will be responsible for fulfilling administration actions decided at project leaders meetings.

Responsibility for hosting Project leaders and task group meetings will be that of the hosting country, in association with the secretariat. Through rotation of meetings at regular intervals, member partners will have their turn at organising meetings and therefore the principle of reciprocity is upheld in terms of costs associated with meeting organisation.

The host will be responsible for arranging meeting venues, supplying local knowledge to attendees in advance of meetings, providing information on accommodation and travel recommendations, venue maps and locations etc.

As agreed by the project leaders, external experts will be invited to provide advice and/or support as necessary. These will be agreed in advance of any costs being incurred and agreed by consensus with partners.

Summary structure of responsibilities:

To coordinate all activities within the Transnational Agreement.

To provide all reports to all partnerships in all working formats.

To provide on request all reports and information in all available formats and languages to outside organisations.

To ensure there is acknowledgement at all levels of ESF funding for activities.

To reach decisions where all partnerships fail to agree on a course of action, based on advice, guidance and expertise from external sources, outside of the partnership.

To monitor the accessibility of venues utilised, under equal opportunities.

## **3. Arrangements for decision-making**

Major decisions will be taken by consensus across all task groups and project leaders actions. Partners will be encourage to fully participate in all decision. At project leaders meetings the partners will not move forward until full consensus is reached, irrespective of size of partnership or budget or contribution. In respect of

task groups, where unanimous consensus cannot be reached the casting vote will be that of the task group leader.

Work carried out between meetings will be agreed in advance at task group meetings with clear structure for workplan, milestone, output and deadline. This will be confirmed for clarity prior to the closure of each meeting, to ensure that all partners are clear about their workplan and contribution for the prevailing six months until the next meeting. It will be the responsibility of the task group leader to ensure that work progresses satisfactorily between meetings.

#### **4. Working language(s)**

- EN

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### **E. Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures**

#### **1. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating of transnational experience and results**

Immediately following each meeting, either project leader or task group, all attendees will be required to complete an evaluation and feedback questionnaire (to be designed at the first meeting) designed to feedback performance ratings about individual experiences of transnational work and work carried out.

Each meeting will contain an agenda item reviewing the communications protocols agreed locally at task group level and at project leaders level.

A wider evaluation of the transnational work will be carried out and this will be conducted in accordance with the auxiliary activity at B 1(c) 5.

#### **2. Mechanisms for updating work programme, working methodology and organisational arrangements**

At the first meeting of each task group the task group leaders will develop a detailed workplan and activity schedule. This will form the basis of the work programme maintenance. At each subsequent task group meeting the leaders will assess the work towards the workplan and report the findings to the project leaders meeting. Corrective action can be taken at this point if required.

The workplan will be updated after each following meeting and feedback to the project leaders group.

In addition, every meeting will review the locally and globally agreed communications protocols for their effectiveness.

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## **F. Other**

### **1. Hyperlink(s) to other information/material**

Lithuania  
[www.lijot.lt](http://www.lijot.lt)

The Netherlands  
[www.rocfriesepoort.nl](http://www.rocfriesepoort.nl) (Leeuwarden)  
[www.rocva.nl](http://www.rocva.nl) (Amsterdam)  
[www.albeda.nl](http://www.albeda.nl) (Rotterdam)  
[www.dongeradeel.nl](http://www.dongeradeel.nl) (Dokkum, Holland)

Sweden  
[www.outsider.se](http://www.outsider.se)

Malta  
[www.msp.gov.mt/services/housing.asp](http://www.msp.gov.mt/services/housing.asp)

Northern Ireland  
[www.simoncommunity.org](http://www.simoncommunity.org)

### **2. Links to other linguistic versions of the TCA**

N.C.

### **3. Dates of (this version of) the TCA**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Sent to "validation by other DPs" by the DP in charge of the TCA secretariat | 25-03-2005 |
| 2. Validated by all DPs   | 29-03-2005 |
| 3. Approved by all managing authorities   | 28-07-2005 |
| 4. TCA Ended  |            |
-

## APPENDIX 2

## ENGAGE

### PROGRAMME WORKER FIRST INTERVIEW

NAME	
DATE	
LOCATION	
TIME IN POST	
Number of beds	
Number of staff	
Number of residents	
Initial views on programme	
<b>Context:</b>	
management support	
location	

Type of resident	
<b>Views on monitoring and evaluation</b>	
What forms do you use now?	
What is collected, how often?	
Views on rickter scale	

Views on using Interviews	
Views on using Focus groups	
Views on using Learning diaries	

## **ENGAGE CONSULTATION WITH CLIENTS**

1. How long have you been involved in Engage?
2. What Engage activities have you been involved in?
3. What do you think of the programme so far? [probe as much as possible on this]
4. What do you expect to get from the programme? [probe as much as possible on this]
5. How can we measure success? What are your views on surveys/questionnaires/ focus groups/interviews – which do you prefer?
6. We need to track people after they have left the programme, so assess its longer term impact. How do you feel about us contacting you after you have left? What is the best way to do that - email, mobile?(do not need details now)

## EVALUATION OF THE ENGAGE PROGRAMME

### INTERIM REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF

1. When did you become involved in the Engage programme?
2. Where you involved in the early stages of the programme, if yes how?
3. To what extent do you think the aims and objectives have been met?

#### *Aims*

To develop a sustainable model of best practice for delivering training needs for homeless people

To enable Foyers to deliver training and employment opportunities to trainees (homeless people), developing transferable skills which will improve the employability of this socially excluded group.

4. Has there been any change of emphasis or re-focusing of the programme's aims and objectives during implementation? If yes what have these changes been and why did they occur?
5. Has implementation of the programme taken longer than expected, why do you think that is?
6. In overall terms what are your views on the approach and structures used to implement the programme? What were the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

7. What in your view have been the key achievements of the programme?
8. What are the key challenges facing the programme in its implementation post pilot?
9. What are the key challenges in the training of front line support staff in the delivery of the various programmes?
10. How do you think these challenges are best dealt with?
11. Have you any other comments you wish to make regarding the development and implementation of the Engage programme?

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

## **ENGAGE**

### **INTERIM REVIEW INTERVIEW WITH CLIENTS**

**Client ref no** \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you been involved in Engage?
  
2. What Engage activities have you been involved in?
  
3. What do you think of the programme so far? [probe as much as possible on this]
  
4. What impact has it had/ what difference has it made to you? [probe as much as possible on this]
  
5. What do you expect to get from the programme? [probe as much as possible on this]
  
6. Are there any changes you would like to see? [probe as much as possible on this]
  
7. What is the best thing about being on the programme?

**Note – focus on employability**

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Review of Recruitment process for ENGAGE Programme Officers June – October 2005**

#### **Introduction**

The recruitment of the 4 Programme officers for the ENGAGE programme took place between June and October 2005. Short-listed candidates were firstly interviewed by a traditional-type panel made up of the Programme Manager, George Sproule, the Chair of the Development Partnership and Foyer representative, Fiona Boyle and the relevant Foyer Manager (Louise Montgomery for Strand interviews and Marie Fusco for all Belfast/Bangor interviews). Candidates were then asked to present their response to a scenario, which had been given to them in advance of the interview, to a group of 2 – 3 residents. Hugh McVeigh (Manager – Belfast Foyer) and Barry Smyth (Manager – Bangor Simon Community hostel) assisted in this secondary process.

Because of this different approach to recruitment, involving the service users, and also because the recruitment process for all 4 sites took place over a 5-month period, it was agreed to ask all participants – staff, candidates and service users – to reflect on and submit their thoughts on the process. This short paper combines these reflections.

#### **Comments from the panel**

Comments were received from two members of the panel, as follows:

##### **Strengths**

- The recruitment process was undertaken with enthusiasm and a positive approach in terms of ensuring the job specification and description would ensure appropriate applicants. The importance of service user involvement was a priority throughout the process.
- Decisions were made in consultation with the ENGAGE steering group and the service users in terms of the format of the interviews and presentations. Roles and responsibilities were agreed. The nature of the resident involvement was appropriately weighted in terms of marking applicants fairly.
- Input from residents was a very useful mechanism for providing a different mechanism to assess candidates – i.e. not just by formal recruitment panel
- Residents took their role very seriously – and were committed to coming back a number of times to input to the various panels at Strand and Belfast Foyers

- Residents' feedback was clear and useful – at times there were different opinions to that of the panel in terms of candidates' suitability. However, this was reflected against the different qualities the panel and residents were looking for.
- Discussions after the sets of interviews were useful – this helped to fully involve the residents in the process – i.e. not just ask them to input and then not to discuss how they felt.

### **Weaknesses and suggestions for improvement**

- Some frustration around the rather limited pool of applicants – which then necessitated us to go back out to advertisement and then on 2 – 3 different occasions internal trawl. Again this may have been for various reasons – undertaking recruitment during the summer, incidence of higher employment in NI etc. As one panel member commented: *“Undertaking recruitment during the summer months proved difficult in terms of numbers of applicants and their subsequent availability for interview.”*
- Some frustration around the administration of the recruitment process by the Simon Community – e.g. wrong forms being sent out, wrong deadlines put onto trawl notices etc.
- On reflection the person specification may have been set slightly too high in terms of training qualifications and experience. Again one comment on this was: *“The specialised nature of the programme made it difficult to find suitable applicants with the relevant knowledge and experience needed for the post.”*
- The ongoing slow process of obtaining PECS checks hindered the recruitment process and meant that we lost one successful candidate (their withdrawal from the post must in part have been because of the delays in starting the post)

### **Feedback from service users**

A total of four service users were involved in the second part of the interview process – two of these on a consistent basis throughout all of the interviews. The following was provided by one service user reflecting on their involvement:

*My involvement in the Engage programme was a positive experience. It gave me an opportunity to appreciate what it's like to 'sit on the other side of the desk', giving me a feeling of actually being involved. Engage helped me develop things such as self esteem. I think it's important to have residents involved and I hope that engage continues. I think that Simon (Community) should continue to involve residents in interviews.*

## **Feedback from staff involved in the service user exercise**

Two staff members were involved in facilitating the service user exercise. Their comments were as follows:

### **Strengths**

- Planning by the Programme Manager of activities.
- Information on the process forwarded both formally and informally was clear and concise outlining the roles and responsibilities of those involved.
- Consideration was given to the needs of the service users.
- Group discussion was facilitated by the Programme Manager to develop the presentation question. This session was also beneficial in bonding the panel and answering any concerns raised. This session resulted in the subsequent presentation question being developed entirely by the service users.
- Before each set of interviews the panel were refreshed on the requirements of the process and the recording tools which were to be used.
- During the interviews the service users conducted themselves in an entirely appropriate fashion in keeping with any other recruitment that I have been involved in. Their first hand experience of the issues highlighted in the presentation scenario informed their supplementary questions to the candidates. Their questioning style was direct and fair.

Their scoring and approach was consistent and took account of the whole person.

- Throughout the process those residents that participated showed motivation and actively took ownership from when they developed the presentation scenario right through to being involved in several recruitments. Very little input was needed from the staff members overseeing this part of the recruitment and the service users conducted themselves in a professional workman like and effective manner.
- Participants openly acknowledged a need for them to improve their knowledge and skills and proactively pursued these goals throughout the process by learning from each other, the staff members and their own personal experiences.
- The inclusion of residents gave the process real credibility by allowing them to have some say in the appointment of individuals into post. In addition this may well help to promote engage at programme level by bringing a form of credibility to the clients (one of us helped to pick her!) and therefore encourage participation.
- Their views were sought by the traditional interview panel which were welcomed and which acknowledged their role in determining the overall score.

### **Weaknesses and suggestions for improvement**

- Staff found it frustrating when they had to rely on at times only one resident to participate – with the suggestion that in future it would be useful to have an undertaking from all four programmes to provide residents at all times if possible.
- Another suggestion was that it would be a good idea to also involve residents in the interview process, even if it is merely to observe. This will contextualise the whole process for them and give them an understanding of the entire event, while enabling them to further develop their skills and knowledge. Allowing them to be involved at this stage will give them an opportunity to appreciate how critical the interview stage is and what we can learn from candidates that we can't during a presentation.

### **Feedback from the candidates**

Feedback was received from one of the 4 successful candidates as follows:

#### **Panel Interview**

The three-person panel made every effort to put me at ease and courteously repeated questions for me.

#### **Presentation**

The 'audience' consisted of two observers and one representative from the Simon Community Resident Committee. I gave my presentation and was then asked questions by the Resident Representative.

My initial perception was that there would be several resident representatives who would give me a 'grilling'. In reality, I felt that the presentation was challenging and was impressed by the resident representative and the pertinent questions I was asked. The questions posed were relevant and realistic, given my previous experiences with residents asking similar questions in the Strand Foyer.

This portion of the interview allowed me to exercise my practical knowledge of the case study and to express my opinions on the best solution – which was challenged, from both a practical standpoint and in a perceptive manner by the Resident Representative.

I personally found this form of interview to have a practical and more realistic format. I enjoyed the challenging questions and being 'put on the spot' by the Resident Representative.

## **Conclusion**

Overall we now have 4 strong candidates in the posts and relevant sites – whilst the recruitment process has been more draining and in-depth than anticipated, there has been considerable learning from it both (a) in terms of involving residents in a meaningful way in the recruitment of people who are going to work with them and (b) in terms of the various sites and the Programme Manager learning to work together.