

Case studies - Working in partnership

Case study 1 - The Childcare Business Programme

In one part of London a local council had, as one part of its regeneration strategy, the provision of support to local unemployed people who were considered to be “extremely hard to reach”. Although having some success, there was a desire to find ways of recruiting more women into training programmes that could lead to employment.

Enterprise Solutions was commissioned to devise a scheme by which such individuals could be accessed and persuaded to take part in the opportunity available. Our own research revealed a shortage of trained and registered childcare professionals offering flexible care for the young children. This issues was impacting upon the participation of women.

In response to this issue, Enterprise Solutions devised a programme to train local people to become childcare professionals with the addition of a business course to help those who wished to set up a sustainable childcare business. In creating the programme, local authority systems and external agencies were included within the delivery framework. The programme was designed not only to meet the need for recruiting hard to reach women from the estates, but also to contribute to improved communications systems in the authority and develop more integrated systems in the provision of registered child care in the authority. The trained childminders would not only provide childcare on the open market but would also contribute to the authority’s childcare pool supporting the regeneration and back to work initiatives.

Many of the target group had experienced difficulties accessing mainstream services, training and education provision due to their low confidence, poor experiences of education and learning, English as an additional language, care and childcare responsibilities.

Enterprise Solutions and ESP set up a management group to investigate the needs of potential participants and local authority and then designed a delivery infrastructure for the programme that offered benefits to both. The programme contained a number of elements to meet the necessary outcomes. These included:

- pre-programme assessment including basic skills and the identification of favoured learning styles
- an accredited Childminding course at both Level 2 and 3
- basic skills components
- an introduction to business and finance programme including business start-up
- the inclusion of the local authority officer responsible for childminding registration
- the availability of funders who might support business start-up
- the use of a community centre as the focal point for the programme
- the provision of a crèche run by individuals from the same community background as participants
- the provision of a subsidy to meet travel costs

Eleven of the thirteen learners acquired an NVQ 3 in Childminding Practice. Six people registered as childminders and joined the authority’s childcare pool. Others secured employment in childcare related occupations.

Through this partnership ES drew hard to reach participants into the programme resulting in an increase in the authority’s childcare pool and the opportunity for participants to become economically active either through employment or via the establishment of a childcare business.