



March 2009

DEVELOPING A TYPOLOGY OF GROUNDWORK APPROACHES TO TACKLING WORKLESSNESS

Final report prepared by

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLEC)

Presented to

Groundwork UK

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The brief

Groundwork has a strong commitment to tackling unemployment and worklessness. In times of economic recession, the issue of worklessness is particularly prevalent as are its links to a host of other economic, social and environmental issues including poverty, crime and education. The number of people out of work but seeking employment (the unemployed) and the number of people out of work as a result of an illness or other long term factor (the workless) is on the rise and is set to continue.

Groundwork has over the last five years developed and delivered a host of programmes and projects, both independently and in partnership, that have sought to support the unemployed and workless into not only employment, but wider skills development, training and education. The programme and project activities implemented by Groundwork have adopted a myriad of approaches to tackling unemployment and worklessness ranging from brokerage to placements, to up-skilling, to community development, each of which have had their relative successes and merits. Interventions to tackling unemployment and worklessness will take on added significance as communities adapt to the impact of the recession and it will thus be increasingly important that Groundwork continue to promote what they can offer to public bodies and funders with regard to worklessness programmes and projects.

Groundwork have thus commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) as part of their membership agreement to draw together all these examples of programmes, projects and approaches into a succinct typology which Trusts can draw upon to deliver unemployment and worklessness related activities now and in the future. The typology is to be backed up by project examples of existing good practice by Groundwork in tackling unemployment and worklessness.

1.2 Methodology

In order to develop the typology of Groundwork approaches to tackling worklessness and in effect the worklessness interventions on offer from Trusts, CLES have undertaken a desk-based review of project summaries about Groundwork worklessness projects and services. The project summaries have been both provided as examples of good practice by Groundwork UK; and have also been drawn from CLES reports as part of the Impact Evaluation process. We have evidenced each of the categories of approach in the typology with a project example, further demonstrating the value and impact of the approach, together with the target group. For five of the project examples we have then undertaken a strategic interview with the project manager in order to derive a case study that examines the pros and cons of the specific approach.

To frame the Groundwork specific programmes, projects and approaches in contemporary issues and policy we have additionally undertaken an assessment of the current scale and complexity of unemployment and worklessness in the UK; and a strategic overview of the current welfare reform and worklessness policy landscape. The typology of approaches and policy overview have been used to shape a series of thoughts as to how Groundwork UK strategically and Groundwork Trusts in delivery terms should undertake worklessness activities in the future.

Report structure

This report details the analysis of the Groundwork project examples and subsequent typology; and the overview of welfare reform policy. The report consists of the following sections:

- the scale and complexity of worklessness in the UK;
- a typology of Groundwork approaches to tackling worklessness;
- the fit of Groundwork approaches to national welfare reform and worklessness policy;
- where next for Groundwork in delivering worklessness interventions?

Useful definitions

Economic inactivity: Refers to when an individual is either not seeking work or are unable to start work.

Recession: A recession refers to a slowdown in economic activity in a country over a sustained period of time. Gross Domestic Production (GDP), employment, investment spending, household incomes and business profits all fall during a recession.

Unemployment: Unemployment occurs when an individual is able to work and currently seeking work, but the person is without work.

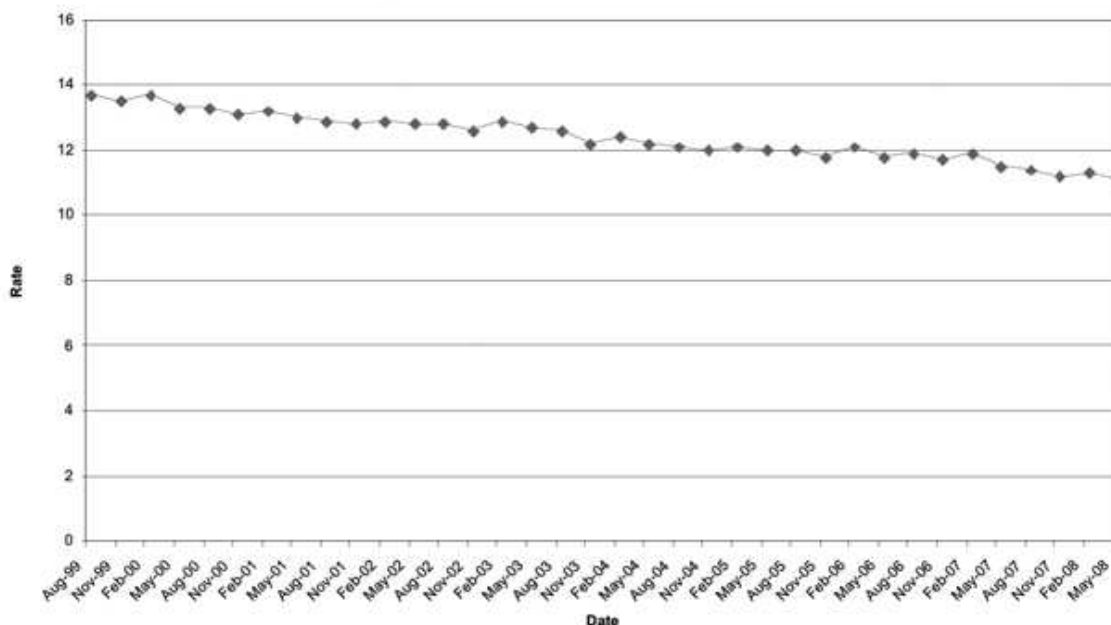
Worklessness: Used to describe those individuals of working age who are not economically active within the labour market. This could include lone parents, those claiming incapacity related benefits or those removed from the labour market as a result of economic restructuring.

2 THE SCALE AND COMPLEXITY OF WORKLESSNESS IN THE UK

2.1 The scale of worklessness

Around 8 million people of working age in the United Kingdom do not currently participate in the labour market. This is for a variety of reasons including: early retirement; being in full-time, further or higher education; or as a result of being a full time carer of a family member. Unemployed and workless individuals also make up a significant proportion of those absent from the labour market. August 2008¹ figures suggest that 4.3 million people of working age (11.9%) are currently claiming an out of work benefit (Jobseeker’s Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and/or Income Support) in the UK, with these figures detailing that 2.6 million of these claim some form of incapacity or sickness related benefit. These figures have declined slightly or stagnated in recent years, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the current period of economic recession there are real concerns that unemployment and worklessness are set to rise further.

Figure 1: % of working age population claiming JSA, Incapacity Benefit and Income Support²



¹ Source of figures: Department for Work and Pensions Tabulation Tool - <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp>

² Source of figure: Department for Work and Pensions Tabulation Tool - <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp>

2.2 The complexity of worklessness

Worklessness is a highly complex issue and there are a variety of reasons why an individual may become workless, including:

- ❑ **skills shift** – with the decline of heavy industry and manufacturing, the UK has witnessed a shift towards a greater number of financial and knowledge based jobs which require higher level skills. Young people who leave education without such skills are therefore more likely to struggle to enter the labour market;
- ❑ **poverty and disadvantage** – whilst the UK has, until recently, enjoyed sustained economic growth, the gap between rich and poor has increased. Poverty and disadvantage has contributed towards poor health and low aspirations which has in turn resulted in sections of the population being excluded from the labour market;
- ❑ **poor health and illness** – in some cases, long-term ill health, disability, or mental illness can be the catalyst for an individual becoming workless;
- ❑ **generational and cultural** – in communities which experienced high levels of unemployment in the past, there is evidence that the impacts of unemployment in one generation can lead to a loss of motivation and aspiration in the next generation;
- ❑ **economic recession** – in a period of economic recession, the number of available jobs in an area decreases making it more difficult for people to find work. The longer someone is without work, the more likely they are to become workless in the long-term, which is evident in the current period of economic recession.

As noted above, there are a variety of factors that can lead to an individual becoming workless. This section will now go on to further explore how worklessness resonates with different groups in society and in different geographical locations.

Ethnicity

Statistics from the Office for National Statistics³ find that in the three months to June 2008, the proportion of working-age people living in workless households was highest for the Chinese ethnic group, at 28.3%, and lowest for the Indian ethnic group, at 7.6%. The rate of worklessness for households by ethnicity of the household reference person was highest for the Other Black ethnic group, at 32.7%. The rate was lowest for the Indian ethnic group, at 10.6%.

Locality

Whilst recent years have seen a slight decline in worklessness nationally, it nevertheless remains stubbornly high in some localities, with pockets of much higher levels of worklessness centred in certain geographical locations. Typically these locations are characterised by industrial decline (e.g. in May 2008, the highest claimant rates (over 23% of the working age population) were recorded in the local authority areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent in South Wales, followed by Knowsley and Liverpool in Merseyside). Coastal towns, inner-city areas, and ex-coalfields are also all particularly vulnerable to high levels of worklessness. Pockets of high levels of worklessness also exist in the North East (Easington, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough) and the central belt of Scotland (Glasgow and Inverclyde).

Age

People of different ages often have different reasons for becoming workless. For older people, poor health may be the driving factor, whilst young people may face different barriers to entering the labour market. For example, they may have left school with few qualifications or there may be a lack of appropriate employment opportunities in their community. Young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are particularly vulnerable to becoming workless in the future as they may lack the skills, experience, motivation and qualifications necessary in order to remain in employment later in life.

³ Source of figure: Office for National Statistics - <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/work0808.pdf>

2.3 Tackling worklessness during the economic recession

As a result of the current period of economic recession, the UK is facing significant labour market issues, including rising unemployment and an entrenchment of worklessness. Whilst the economic crises of recent months have led to widespread concern about the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, it is important not to lose sight of levels of worklessness. Whilst redundancies and 'new' unemployment is worrying, now is the time to redouble efforts to tackle worklessness in order to prevent disadvantaged communities being further excluded. At this time, we need to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which worklessness can be tackled and as such, this research is particularly pertinent.

3 A TYPOLOGY OF GROUNDWORK APPROACHES TO TACKLING WORKLESSNESS

3.1 The diversity of Groundwork worklessness projects

As highlighted in the previous section the issue of worklessness is on the rise in the United Kingdom and is heterogenic and complex, meaning that it has different implications for different groups and for different localities. This heterogeneity and complexity of worklessness means that Government and organisations with commitments to tackling the issue have to adopt different policies, approaches and projects dependent upon the voracity of the issue, the locality and most importantly the target group. Individuals who have been away from the labour market for a significant period of time such as long-term claimants of Incapacity Benefit will require a different project approach than those who have recently left employment as a result of the recession. Similarly, young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) will require a different project approach to those out of work as a result of a mental illness or physical disability.

Groundwork has a strong history of working with a variety of marginalised groups across a number of themes and tailoring programme and project approaches to their diverse needs. This variety and diversity is also reflected in how Groundwork nationally and locally approach the issue of worklessness. What we have is a myriad of projects to tackling worklessness that are rooted in supporting local workless individuals into skills development, training and ultimately employment. There are however commonalities between Groundwork worklessness projects across the UK and comparisons can be drawn between and lessons learnt from projects in approach terms. CLES have examined the following ten projects to develop the typology of Groundwork approaches to tackling worklessness:

- ❑ Groundwork Black Country: Graduate Apprentice Programme;
- ❑ Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire: Sporting Chances;
- ❑ Groundwork East Durham: Placing People First;
- ❑ Groundwork Hertfordshire: Green Team;
- ❑ Groundwork Pennine Lancashire: Movin' On;
- ❑ Groundwork Pennine Lancashire: New Boundaries;
- ❑ Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire: The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre;
- ❑ Groundwork Thames Valley: SKIDZ Reading Motor Education Project (RMEP)
- ❑ Groundwork Wakefield: Wakefield Homebuilder;
- ❑ Groundwork West Durham & Darlington: Employment Programme.

From the analysis of the projects described above, it is possible to detail the key approaches which Groundwork utilise to tackle worklessness in a typology, as illustrated in the table below:

Approach 1:	Tackling worklessness through volunteering
Approach 2:	Tackling worklessness through brokerage
Approach 3:	Tackling worklessness through training, vocation and placements
Approach 4:	Tackling worklessness through tackling NEET
Approach 5:	Tackling worklessness through industry specific approaches

Figures 1-5 detail the core approaches which Groundwork utilise for different client groups in order to tackle worklessness. The figures provide a description of the approach, together with project evidence from Groundwork Trusts, and an assessment of the core pros of adopting the approach.

3.2 Approach 1 – tackling worklessness through volunteering

Groundwork undertake a range of community activities which seek to promote volunteering particularly amongst young people. Volunteering both provides a service for a community and enables participants to gain valuable skills which they can use in future employment endeavours. In the case of Graduate Apprentice Programme outlined below it also draws new volunteers and subsequently labour to a locality which has a positive implication for not only the individual themselves but also for the local economy in spending terms. Projects such as Sporting Chances not only provide a community service through volunteering for local facilities, they also support tackling other issues aside from employment such as anti-social behaviour. The following table sets out three project examples that aim to tackle worklessness through volunteering, and discusses some of the advantages of this approach.

Figure 1: Tackling worklessness through volunteering

Approach	Project name	About the project	Target group	The pros of the approach
Volunteering	Sporting Chances	Sporting Chances operated by Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire aims to increase the number of young people volunteering their time to support the provision of sports and physical activity sessions in nine deprived communities in Coventry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides staffing for multi-use games areas; • Increases number of young people volunteering; • Enables confidence development opportunities for participants; • Provides a mix of practical experience and training; • Reduces related issues such as anti-social behaviour; • Successes means more funding and roll out across other deprived areas;
	Graduate Apprentice Programme	The Graduate Apprentice Programme operated by Groundwork Black Country aims to provide volunteering opportunities to graduates who want to work in the third and/or environmental sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent graduates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws new graduates to the Black Country; • Retains graduates within the Black Country economy; • Increase third sector employment and capacity; • Supports LAA indicators around worklessness and volunteering; • Enables graduates to develop the practical skills required to work in the third sector.
	Horticultural Healing	This project, developed by Groundwork Plymouth, provides volunteering opportunities for people recovering from mental health problems or acquired brain injuries. The project's beneficiaries carry out maintenance work supported by the Groundwork team which is both therapeutic and develops new skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with brain injuries e.g. stroke, accidents; • Individuals with mental illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is therapeutic for participants; • Allows people to develop the skills and confidence to enter the work place; • Has helped to establish strong partnerships with local mental health organisations; • Offers participants a greater sense of routine.

3.2.1 Case study 1 – Sporting Chances: Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire

About the project

Sporting Chances is a three year programme operated by Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire that aims to increase the number of young people volunteering their time to help provide sports and physical activity sessions in nine highly deprived communities in Coventry. The project has the dual purpose of managing sports sessions on multi-use games areas developed by Groundwork and also enabling the up-skilling of young people aged 16-25 through giving them opportunities to volunteer to run sessions at these facilities. Sporting Chances currently run 15 sporting sessions a week over three multi-use games sites in Coventry. The project receives funding from a range of sources including volunteering funder 'V', which funds three part-time coordinators. The project also utilises local parks and greenspaces to deliver sport sessions enabling those without direct access to sporting facilities the opportunity to participate.

Core objectives of the project

From an interview with the project officer for the Sporting Chances project, it became apparent that the project has four core objectives:

- 1) to provide the opportunity for young people to gain more skills and experience;
- 2) to provide access for young people to a host of training certificates;
- 3) to seek to make young people from deprived areas relevant to the workforce;
- 4) to provide a new generation of community sports coaches and practitioners.

Core outputs of the project

The Sporting Chances project commenced in April 2008 and to date, in output terms, has engaged 45 volunteers.

Advantages of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The core advantage of the Sporting Chance project as a model of tackling worklessness and unemployment is that it provides young people, through volunteering, with a range of skills that can not only be transferred into employment but also which affect their wider lifestyle. There are a range of other advantages of the project in tackling worklessness/unemployment:

- **sport is a viable career path** – the model of volunteering through sport and offering a range of certificates and career advice through Sporting Chances provides participants with a view that sport and community sport in particular is a viable career path and a viable industry. Additionally sport is an issue which many young people can relate to and are motivated by;
- **contact time in a comfortable environment is key** – with the Sporting Chances project operating at a very local level in some of the most deprived communities in Coventry, it is held in an environment that many of the young volunteers understand and can relate to. This makes a project like this different to those sports programmes run by public sector agencies for example. A further advantage of the approach in tackling worklessness and unemployment is that the project is very personalised. It is based around project officers working in an individualised nature with the volunteers both supporting them through the project and additionally offering further advice about what to do next;
- **up-skilling equals new opportunities** – one of the beauties of volunteering projects around sport is that they provide a host of up-skilling opportunities for participants in terms of the qualifications and certificates they can gain. Sporting Chances offer opportunities around health and safety, child welfare, sport coaching and a host of other qualifications for the participants. These qualifications are useful as participants seek to move from volunteering towards further skills and employment;
- **a recognition of distance travelled** – Sporting Chances is soft in its outcome focus. The project is not about counting hard output in terms of getting young people directly into employment but is more interested in the distance travelled and aspirational change of the participant as a result of the project. The project through volunteering raises the aspirations of the volunteers to move into other vocations in the sport and youth fields including youth work. Changes in

aspirations are important outcomes in tackling worklessness and unemployment particularly for those furthest removed from the labour market;

- ❑ **volunteering and advice in one** – the added value of Sporting Chances is that it does not just provide opportunities for volunteering in community sports activities for young people. It also provides a range of other activities for the young people in terms of making them 'job-ready'. It provides career support, advice and signposting towards further training and employment. Participants also receive advice on the compilation of CVs;
- ❑ **the development of a sporting culture in the West Midlands** – the Sporting Chances project in Coventry and Warwickshire has not only directly supported tackling worklessness and unemployment through volunteering, but has also tackled a range of other agendas particularly around healthier lifestyles. Involvement in sport can raise aspirations and subsequently raise willingness to engage in the labour market. Sporting Chances is embedded in the Midland Games and also regional level Olympics 2012 considerations;
- ❑ **added value beyond volunteering, skills and employment** – the Sporting Chances volunteering project goes beyond worklessness and unemployment impacts to provide a range of additional benefits to both the individual participants and to local communities. There are a number of added value benefits including: changing behaviours of participants (away from drugs and alcohol for example); tackling community issues such as anti-social behaviour; providing an incentive for the individual to change through career development; and enabling a position of authority in the community for the individual. This cross-thematic added value is also reflected in the partners which the Sporting Chances project is engaged with including: neighbourhood management teams; the local authority; other inclusion projects; and local schools and the police;
- ❑ **local economic investment** – as a result of the funding received through 'V', the Sporting Chances project has been able to pay the volunteers for some of the sessions they run. This is important in that it enables participants to gain experience and an income and also in that it provides investment in the local economy.

Negatives of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The above section has demonstrated the key advantages that a volunteering approach, namely Sporting Chances has in tackling worklessness and unemployment. There are however disadvantages and stumbling blocks, primarily in the need for the approach to be highly individualised and personalised:

- ❑ **high demand is a problem** – Sporting Chances has been successful in attracting potential volunteers and has also had a number of individuals referred to the project from other agencies. High demand is however a problem for volunteering projects, especially relating to sport, as time is required in project officer terms in detailing expectations and up-skilling participants to enable them to run sessions. This requirement for an individualised and personalised approach potentially reduces the number of direct employment outputs from a project such as Sporting Chances but increases the rigidity of some of the outcomes. Sporting Chances identified that training 'en masse' was difficult when it came to the induction of the volunteers;
- ❑ **expectation management** – volunteering approaches to tackling worklessness also need to be careful in how they manage the expectations of the volunteer. There is no guaranteed or direct route into employment as a result of being engaged in a project such as Sporting Chances. Volunteering approaches are thus much softer in their outcomes than brokerage or other employment focused approaches to tackling worklessness and unemployment.

3.2.2 Summary of approach 1 – tackling worklessness through volunteering

Tackling worklessness and unemployment through volunteering is a relatively 'soft' approach adopted by Groundwork to tackling worklessness and unemployment, particularly amongst young people. Volunteering on a project such as Sporting Chances is the starting point of the road to employment with a number of key life and work skills developed along the way.

3.3 Approach 2 – tackling worklessness through brokerage

Groundwork Trusts, particularly in core urban areas with high incidences of unemployment and worklessness offer a range of jobs brokerage projects and services. These range from one stop shops on the high street to specialist projects. The focus of the Groundwork approach is not just about moving an individual into employment in hard output terms, but providing a range of personalised services that raise aspirations and confidence of the individual. Key to the Groundwork approach is the two way relationship they have with both the individual and local employers. Placing People First, which is outlined below, works closely with local employers to offer placements to the local long-term unemployed thus improving skills and the chances of sustainable employment. The Employment Programme also outlined below combines work tasters for the long-term unemployed with supporting projects which improve the local environment. The following table sets out two project examples that aim to tackle worklessness through brokerage, and discusses some of the advantages of this approach.

Figure 2: Tackling worklessness through brokerage

Approach	Project name	About the project	Target group	The pros of the approach
Brokerage	Placing People First	Placing People First operated by Groundwork East Durham provides people living in the District of Easington who face multiple barriers to employment the opportunity to engage with the labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises aspirations of the participants; Works closely in partnership with other providers such as the Northern Way worklessness pilots; Works closely with local employers – has enabled placements for long-term unemployed with over 50 local companies; placements are for between 26 and 52 weeks for 30 hours per week; The project is demand led by these companies; A placement process equips long-term unemployed people with the qualifications and skills necessary to move into sustainable employment; Provides additional individualised support in terms of tax credits and benefits; Enables both 'hard' outputs and 'soft' outcomes.
	Employment Programme	The Employment Programme operated by Groundwork West Durham and Darlington has two aspects. New Deal for Young Persons delivers 13 week placement opportunities to long-term unemployed, work ready persons aged between 18 and 25, referred for work experience and directed job search. Stepping Stones into Sustainable Employment seeks to support people into employment and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-25 year olds; Those unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a way in to the labour market for people in an area where competition for local jobs is stiff; Provides a taste of work particularly for lone parents; Provides a link to community regeneration as clients on the placements carry out neighbourhood improvements; Stepping Stones supports those most marginalised from the labour market.

3.3.1 Case study 2 – Placing People First: Groundwork East Durham

About the project

The Placing People First programme aims to provide people living in the District of Easington, who face multiple barriers to employment, the opportunity to engage with the labour market. The project was developed in response to local demand, as economic inactivity rates have increased in Easington in recent years. Therefore the primary issues addressed by the project are the low numbers of economically active and high unemployment rates in the District of Easington. Placing People First provides individually tailored placement opportunities for beneficiaries who have been away from the labour market for long periods of time to equip them with qualifications and experience necessary to move into further sustainable employment. The target beneficiaries are usually those that have been unemployed for over six months; however there is some flexibility with regard to taking on people who have been unemployed for short periods of time. The project is demand led by prospective employers providing the framework by which beneficiaries are subsequently equipped with the skills, knowledge, qualifications and the confidence required by employers.

Core objectives of the project

There are a number of core objectives of the Placing People First project which became apparent following conversations with the project officer. These include:

- ❑ to raise the aspirations of the participants;
- ❑ to give those furthest from the labour market an opportunity to experience the workplace and overcome the 'fear of work';
- ❑ to provide a flexible programme that 'puts people first';
- ❑ to support local businesses and in turn the local economy.

Core outputs of the project

The project is coming to an end in 2009. 67% of participants have gone on to further employment, whilst 77% have had positive outcomes such as voluntary work.

Advantages of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

There are many advantages of the brokerage / ILM approach, including:

- ❑ **flexible and individualised approach** – as the name suggests, Placing People First prides itself on its bespoke approach. Individuals that have been out of work for long periods of time often face a number of barriers to entering the labour market and may require personalised support to enter and remain in work. To achieve this, Placing People First provides participants with individually tailored placement opportunities that are appropriate to each individual's skills, abilities and preferences;
- ❑ **helping to overcome 'the fear of work'** – individuals that have been away from employment for a long time may have developed skewed perceptions about what the working world is like. Some people may lack confidence and self-esteem, and underestimate the skills they already possess. Placement opportunities, such as Placing People First, give people the opportunity to prove to themselves what they can achieve;
- ❑ **the opportunity to undertake training and develop workplace skills** – a large number of the participants who enter the project have few qualifications as a result of having left school early.
- ❑ **a diversity of work placement opportunities** – it was soon recognised that a diversity of placement opportunities would be required in order to attract both male and female participants. In light of this, Placing People First sought to engage with a variety of employers in order to offer a broader range of opportunities, such as teaching assistant positions;

- ❑ **raising the capacity of placement providers** – by engaging with local employers, particularly those in the community and voluntary sectors, Placing People First has the effect of supporting and helping to develop local businesses and organisations;
- ❑ **economic contribution to the community** – whilst ILM projects can be expensive, the majority of expenses go on employees' wages. In turn, this increases their local spend and helps support the local economy.

Negatives of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

Despite the many advantages our research nevertheless identified some disadvantages to the approach including:

- ❑ **expense** – ILM projects, such as Placing People First, are comparatively expensive. However, as noted above, the majority of the costs go towards participants' wages which in turn is trickled back into the local economy through their local spend. Furthermore, whilst ILM projects can be expensive in the short term, as they help to reduce the number of people claiming benefits; there are long term economic gains to be made.
- ❑ **critique of the approach** – brokerage and ILM projects are sometime criticised for encouraging employers to become dependent on temporary employees who 'plug gaps' in their workforce. It has been suggested that this may discourage them from employing and investing in full-time, permanent members of staff.

3.3.2 Summary of approach 2 – tackling worklessness through brokerage

The brokerage, or ILM approach, as adopted in Placing People First can be a highly effective way of engaging people who have been out of work for longer periods of time. They allow participants not only to gain work experience, but also provide a wage and therefore help to incentivise individuals to work. Brokerage approaches are also beneficial to local employers by helping to fill gaps in their labour force and also raising their capacity.

3.4 Approach 3: tackling worklessness through training, vocation and placements

Groundwork offer a range of project and service activities which aim to prevent unemployment and worklessness occurring in the first place. Through offering training, vocations and placements to primarily young people, Groundwork seek to develop both the direct skills and the life skills required by young people to access employment in the future. Often the training and placements are in industries where there is an evidenced local need for new labour, such as the Green Team project outlined below, which provides training related to environmental improvement, landscaping and wider construction. The SKIDZ project also offers a preventative vocation based approach to tackling worklessness, offering vocational training for young people as young as 12 years old. The following table sets out five project examples that aim to tackle worklessness through training, vocation and placements, and discusses some of the advantages of this approach.

Figure 3: Tackling worklessness through training, vocation and placements

Approach	Project name	About the project	Target group	The pros of the approach
Training, Vocation and Placements	Green Team (Hertfordshire)	Green Team operated by Groundwork Hertfordshire is a 16 week full-time voluntary training scheme for unemployed young people operating across Hertfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-25 year olds who are unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people receive training in practical activities relating to environmental improvement including landscaping and planting; Training provides the direct skills required to access local employment opportunities in the environmental, landscaping or construction industries; Trainees are also supported to complete a national qualification; Training provides both direct, relevant skills and additionally life skills; Ongoing jobs brokerage support offered after completion of project; Project focus based upon consultation with young people themselves and agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and Connexions; Project linked directly to growth of construction industry in Hertfordshire.
	SKIDZ Reading Motor Education Project	The SKIDZ Reading Motor Education Project operated by Groundwork Thames Valley is a joint venture with the SKIDZ Foundation on the Whitley Estate in Reading offering vocational opportunities in motor mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people from the age of 12. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a preventative and early stage approach to worklessness; Supports better achievement in school, progression in training and ultimately in gaining employment; Provides an added alternative to mainstream education; Linked to a range of other thematic agendas such as crime, particularly preventing incidences of car theft; Operates as a social enterprise.
	Successful Transitions	Funded by the European Social Fund and Jobcentre Plus, this project developed by Groundwork Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford aimed to help people on benefits return to work by tackling the barriers that prevent them from entering the workforce. For example, access to basic skills training, and raising awareness of education and training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who may otherwise face barriers to employment due to illness, disability, or lone parent status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundwork has good understanding of the local area and the barriers facing particular members of the community; The approach helps to raise participants' aspirations; Staff are flexible and responsive to participants' needs, ensuring that the course runs along the lines of what learners want, not towards prescribed outcomes; Provides an opportunity for participants to develop skills and confidence for the workplace; Reaches those furthest from the labour market.

Approach	Project name	About the project	Target group	The pros of the approach
Training, Vocation and Placements	Footprints	Footprints is an Intermediate Labour Market scheme (ILM) developed by Groundwork Neath and Port Talbot. Groundwork is contracting to deliver the project under the Workways partnership programme. The project aims to assist the transition into sustainable employment by overcoming barriers to work and offering 'real work' opportunities for people on New Deal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People on New Deal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists the transition into sustainable employment by overcoming barriers to work; • The project provides real life work experience allowing participants to develop new skills and confidence, encouraging employability; • Training is built into the provision, meaning clients are able to accredit some of the skills they develop whilst on the project; • Exemplifies Groundwork as a deliverer of contract-based work; • Complements Groundwork's environmental improvement activity.
	Green Team (South London)	Groundwork South London developed the Green Team project: a 28 week programme which supports long-term unemployed people to access employment in the horticultural sector. The programme involves classroom based and practical experience, a work placement and job search support. The review entailed interviews with the Project Manager, a survey of current and past beneficiaries, and interviews with key stakeholders (Jobcentre Plus and Connexions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed adults considered 'hard to reach' e.g. the long-term unemployed, BME groups, lone parents, ex-offenders, substance abusers, and the over 50s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complements Groundwork's environmental improvement activity; • Provides holistic support to participants (such as support with housing benefit and mental illness support), recognising that individuals may face multiple barriers to entering employment; • It helps to fill a gap in the labour market for people with horticultural skills and experience; • Offers participants practical work experience and the chance to develop personal skills and also the opportunity to work towards qualifications.;

3.4.1 Case study 3 – Green Team: Groundwork Hertfordshire

About the project

Groundwork Hertfordshire's Green Team is a 16 week full-time voluntary training scheme for unemployed young people operating across Hertfordshire. The project developed in response to high local demand for this type of activity; Groundwork Hertfordshire were already delivering projects for referral agencies, such as the Probation Service, and it seemed to make sense for Groundwork Hertfordshire to establish their own programme. The Green Team is made up of five young people aged 16-25 at a time, who receive accredited training in outdoor environmental work such as landscaping, planting, tree maintenance, coppicing, path building and pond clearance. Upon completion of the training, participants gain a national qualification: a City & Guilds in Land Based Studies, which enhances participants' chances of gaining employment in environmental, landscaping or construction industries. The project receives funding from a range of sources including volunteering funder 'V'.

Core objectives of the project

Following an interview with a project officer from Groundwork Hertfordshire who is involved in the initiative, it became apparent that the Green Team project has a number of core objectives:

- ❑ to provide the opportunity for young people that are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) to gain meaningful work experience;
- ❑ to provide access for young people to gain accredited training;
- ❑ to help reduce local levels of young people that are NEET and thus help prevent future worklessness;
- ❑ to give young people the opportunity to develop the personal skills necessary to find and remain in employment;
- ❑ to meet local demand for skilled individuals to work in the environmental and landscape sectors.

Core outputs of the project

The Green Team project has had a number of positive outputs. In terms of measurable outputs, approximately 70% of participants have gone on to employment or further training, and 100% of participants have gained CSCS accreditation and first aid certification. In addition, there have been a number of 'soft' outcomes identified; these include improved mental and physical health.

Advantages of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The core advantage of the Green Team project as a model of tackling worklessness and unemployment is that it provides young people through volunteering with a range of skills that can not only be transferred into employment within the landscape and environmental sector but also which affect their wider lifestyle. There are a range of other advantages of the project in tackling worklessness and unemployment:

- ❑ **the environmental and landscape sector as a viable career path** - the model of volunteering through environmental and landscape activity and offering accredited training provides participants with a view that the environmental and landscape sector is a viable career path and a viable industry;
- ❑ **the opportunity to gain new qualifications and workplace skills** – a large number of the participants who enter the project have few qualifications as a result of having left school early. Therefore, an important aspect of the project is to give young people the chance to gain City & Guilds qualifications and the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) as well as first aid and health and safety training. In addition, in the process of the training programme participants develop their presentation and communication skills and get experience of writing blogs;

- ❑ **volunteering and advice in one** – the added value of the Green Team project is that participants not only undertake accredited training, but they also have access to other advice that may help them to find employment upon completion of the training programme. As part of their own corporate responsibility activity, the telecommunications company 'T-Mobile' have developed a partnership with Groundwork Hertfordshire whereby T-Mobile members of staff spend time with the volunteers giving training on job seeking skills;
- ❑ **helping participants overcome personal barriers to employment** – as well as offering participants practical advice with regard to seeking employment, every third week participants have the opportunity to spend time with a Youth Worker. This is a chance for the participants to 'let off steam' and discuss any personal issues they are facing, for example bullying, racism, drugs and alcohol issues;
- ❑ **nurturing a sense of achievement** – one of the key advantages of undertaking a structured training scheme is that participants often gain a strong sense of achievement as they get to follow a project through from start to finish. It is also common for the contractor to write a letter of thanks to the Green Team which again engenders a sense of achievement and pride. This sense of ownership distinguishes the project from 'community service' work, which some of the participants may have undertaken in the past;
- ❑ **added value beyond volunteering, skills and employment** – the Green Team project goes beyond worklessness and unemployment impacts to provide a range of additional benefits to both the individual participants and to local communities. There are a number of added value benefits including: changing behaviours of participants (away from drugs and alcohol for example); tackling community issues such anti-social behaviour; and providing an incentive for the individual to change through career development.

Negatives of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

As noted above, there are a number of significant advantages of the training, vocation and placement approach, such as the Green Team project however, there are, inevitably, a number of challenges that need to be overcome:

- ❑ **recruitment** – the Green Team initiative attempts to reach those that are considered 'hard to reach', and therefore recruitment can be a challenge. Uptake for the programme can be slow and therefore finding innovative ways of publicising the initiative is important. Groundwork Hertfordshire also welcome prospective participants for 'taster sessions', giving them an opportunity to see if it appeals to them before they commit to the project. Effective recruitment demands effective partnerships with local agencies such as Connexions.

3.4.2 Summary of approach 3 – tackling worklessness through training, vocation and placements

Tackling worklessness and unemployment through training, vocation and placements is an effective way of giving young people, particularly those that are NEET, an introduction to the world of work. Through structured programmes such as Green Team, participants not only gain qualifications and accredited training, but also develop 'soft' skills such as team work and time keeping. For those with no employment history, such placements can be a vital first step towards finding employment.

3.5 Approach 4: tackling worklessness through tackling NEET

One of the key challenges facing Government and local areas in contemporary employment policy is those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). These 16 – 18 year olds with poor skills and educational attainment are effectively the next generation of workless. Groundwork Trusts offer a range of projects that seek to both tackle NEET and promote more positive activity, and therefore pre-empt future worklessness. The Movin' On project outlined below offers a range of advice services in an environment young people are comfortable in with the New Boundaries project offering skills opportunities for NEETs in a range of environmental activities. The following table sets out three project examples that aim to tackle worklessness through tackling NEET, and discusses some of the advantages of this approach.

Figure 4: Tackling worklessness through tackling NEET

Approach	Project name	About the project	Target group	The pros of the approach
NEET	Movin' On	Movin' On operated by Groundwork Pennine Lancashire involves working with older young people at a youth work project in Darwen who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEETs (16-18 year olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a dual approach of facilitating young people back into training and supporting wider issues such as homelessness; • Offers a menu of options for participants relating to career options and job search; • Provides a place where young people are prepared to come for job advice; • Project adds value to Connexions and Registered Social Landlord work through joint working and delivery activities; • Enables the production of a personal development plan.
	New Boundaries	New Boundaries operated by Groundwork Pennine Lancashire is a physical installation project with a social and environmental conscience. It aims to deliver a project that improves the appearance of homes in the Blackburn with Darwen borough, and simultaneously improves the skills of young people living there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET (16-18 year olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twins environmental improvement with skills development; • Provides a range of skills opportunities including NVQs in fencing and life skills; • Work with a range of members of the local community; • Provides young people in the area with opportunities to develop work and social skills
	Orchard Project	The Orchard Project (part of the New Routes programme), operated by Groundwork Merseyside, involved developing a disused and derelict area of green space to be used by the community to grow fruits and vegetables and be active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET (16-18 year olds) • People with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers an alternative curriculum working with challenging local young people excluded from school or with low attainment, reflecting problematic behaviour; • Enhances participants' self-esteem, skills and confidence; • Encourages independent working and personal satisfaction; • Helps to improve participants' health and well-being; • Brings together environmental improvement and skills development; • Complements work being done by Warrington Youth Service.

3.5.1 Case study 4 – Movin' On: Groundwork Pennine Lancashire

About the project

The Movin' On project, developed by Groundwork Pennine Lancashire, involves working with older young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Running twice a week throughout the year (apart from during school holidays), the project is supported by a Connexions adviser. Movin' On aims to encourage young people to undertake learning and training, either at college or on a training course, or to assist them in finding a job. The latter is achieved through support with writing CVs, assistance with searching for jobs, and developing communication skills and confidence. As well as nurturing practical skills, the project also helps young people to overcome the personal issues that may be preventing them from undertaking learning and training or finding employment. In addition, funding from a local Registered Social Landlord has allowed Groundwork Pennine Lancashire to develop a motorbike maintenance course which helps participants gain skills and develop team working, communication and problem solving skills.

Core objectives of the project

The core objectives of the Movin' On project are:

- ❑ to reduce the number of young people that are NEET;
- ❑ to provide the opportunity for young people to gain more skills and experience;
- ❑ to raise young people's confidence, aspirations and self-esteem;
- ❑ to help young people overcome the personal barriers that may prevent them from undertaking training or entering the labour market;
- ❑ to provide young people with an accessible service.

Core outputs of the project

Between September 2007 and September 2008, the Movin' On project supported 26 young people. Out of the participants, 9 young people have gained employment and 13 young people went on to attend college on a full-time or part-time basis.

Advantages of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The core advantage of the Movin' On project as a model of tackling worklessness and unemployment is that it provides one-to-one, personalised support for young people in an accessible and comfortable environment. This section will now explore this advantage of the approach amongst others:

- ❑ **support in a comfortable environment** – one of the key reasons for the project's success is that it provides young people with one-to-one support in an accessible environment. Some young people find entering Jobcentre Plus and other office-based environments intimidating, with some struggling to use the computer systems. Groundwork Pennine Lancashire recognised this, and by bringing a Connexions adviser into the youth project, they are engaging with young people in a comfortable and supportive environment;
- ❑ **personalised support** – one of the key advantages of the approach is that it provides participants with a personalised approach. The young people engaged in the Movin' On project often face a number of barriers to employment, beyond simply a lack of skills or experience. Through one-to-one confidential sessions with the Connexions adviser, the young people are able to explore and try to overcome the individual challenges they face. Following this, the young people and the adviser develop a personalised development plan, which documents their individual needs and aspirations and plans how they can be met;
- ❑ **practical support in seeking work** – whilst helping participants to overcome personal issues is a key facet of the project; an equally important advantage of the approach is that it helps young people with the practical aspects of finding work. For example, helping young people to search for jobs, complete application forms, write CVs, and accompanying participants to Jobcentre Plus. Groundwork Pennine Lancashire also recognised that many participants did not have bank accounts, so it supported young people with opening an account;

- ❑ **raising aspirations** – many of the young people engaged in the project have a lack of career aspirations, indeed often they have little knowledge of what career options are ‘out there’. Movin’ On, therefore, helps to raise awareness about the sort of job opportunities available, prompting young people to think differently about what options are open to them;
- ❑ **developing confidence and broadening horizons** – in addition to low career aspirations, the young people engaged in the project also have limited confidence, and tend to feel comfortable doing things with friends rather than independently. The programme helps develop confidence within participants to do things on their own and also to raise their self-esteem. Linked to this, by raising participants’ self-esteem, the project also helps to widen their horizons and increase willingness amongst young people to seek training or employment beyond their immediate locality.

Negatives of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The above section has demonstrated the key advantages that an approach that engages with young people that are NEET can have in tackling unemployment and future worklessness, as well as raising confidence and aspirations amongst participants. Nevertheless, the project has experienced a number of stumbling blocks:

- ❑ **maintaining attendance and attention** – some participants struggle to attend the sessions regularly or on time. In addition, as the youth project has pool tables and other facilities, it can be difficult to maintain the participants’ attention. To address this, the Connexions adviser makes sure that they see the young person as soon as they arrive before they are distracted;
- ❑ **high demand** – whilst it is encouraging that the project is popular amongst young people, it can sometimes be a challenge to accommodate the young people excluded from school that come ‘knocking at the door’;
- ❑ **a lack of local job opportunities** – perhaps the most significant challenge facing the project is the lack of jobs in the local area. For those who have gone through the project to find a lack of employment opportunities, it can be highly disheartening. This makes their friends less likely to want to get involved. Groundwork Pennine Lancashire has therefore recognised that it is vital that they sustain participants’ motivation, and encourage them to see the benefits of developing new skills which will in turn make them more competitive applicants for any new jobs that arise.

3.5.2 Summary of approach – tackling worklessness through tackling NEET

Through working with those young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET), it is likely that the Movin’ On project helps to prevent worklessness in the future. From the Movin’ On case study, it is clear that providing young people with a personalised and one-to-one approach is effective in engaging with those young people that find traditional services intimidating. In helping direct participants towards employment and training and also working to develop personal skills and confidence, the approach exemplifies a holistic approach to tackling unemployment and worklessness.

3.6 Approach 5: tackling worklessness through industry specific approaches

The localised nature of Groundwork Trusts means that they can respond through their employment programmes to local labour needs and develop demand led approaches. Groundwork works in partnership with emerging industries in order to offer skills development opportunities to enable the long term unemployed and workless to access new local opportunities. The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre for example enables local people to access opportunities in the regeneration sector through training in construction skills. The following table sets out three project examples that aim to tackle worklessness through industry specific approaches, and discusses some of the advantages of this approach.

Figure 5: Tackling worklessness through industry specific approaches

Approach	Project Name	About the Project	Target group	The pros of the Approach
Industry Specific	The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre	The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre operated by Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire was established in order to ensure that jobs created as a result of the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Staffordshire Moorlands are filled by people of those areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term unemployed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves the skills of local people by providing a range of construction training; Assists local people to compete for employment in the construction industry; Works with developers and contractors to enable them to access local labour; Provides a variant approach, not just pushing people into employment; Enables local people to be 'job ready'; Enables a generation of income through training courses; Provides a variety of approaches offered in a individualised nature; Has positive engagement with local companies.
	Wakefield Homebuilder	The Wakefield Homebuilder operated by Groundwork Wakefield aims to supply the local labour market with 'work ready' individuals with a good foundation in the construction industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed and disadvantaged young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a skilled workforce for an industry where there is a short supply of workers, subsequently tackling unemployment; Develops and trains individuals to achieve entry into construction industry; Enables sustainable employment through skills development; Has key strategic links with achievements reported to the skills, enterprise and worklessness group of the LSP; Fosters partnership working between project and employers.
	Construction Training	Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale developed this training programme offering a variety of accredited and non-accredited courses in construction. From their base in Oldham, the centre also offers an online CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme). The Trust works with a variety of partners to deliver the programme, including private sector clients. Each course is tailored to the requirements of the client but also respects the learning pace of the trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainees get an opportunity to gain a qualification and either progress towards further education or access employment; The Construction Training programme fills gaps in training provision and offers many young people future opportunities by teaching them a trade; The programme increases young people's confidence and skills; Groundwork works with local agencies making it easier for participants to find employment upon completion of training; Local employers benefit from the Construction Training programme as it provides a skilled workforce.

3.6.1 Case Study 5 – The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre: Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire

About the project

The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is a partnership focused approach to tackling worklessness that hones in upon up-skilling and finding employment in the construction industry for unemployed people living in North Staffordshire. The concept of a Construction Employment Centre originally emerged four years ago through a partnership group including: the Learning and Skills Council, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, RENEW North Staffordshire, Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire and local housing associations. The project emerged directly from a recognition that there was significant regeneration taking place in North Staffordshire and that there was subsequent employment opportunity for local people in the construction trade. The project had an overarching vision of 'enabling local people to compete for local jobs, regenerating North Staffordshire' with supporting objectives of:

- ❑ improving the skills of local people by providing a range of construction training;
- ❑ assisting local people to compete for employment within the industry;
- ❑ providing recruitment assistance to developers and contractors enabling them to access local labour.

Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire are the host partners for the Employment Centre, with the project funded by a range of sources to date. The project has received special initiative funding from the tail-end of the Single Regeneration Budget and core funding from Advantage West Midlands and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Core outputs of the project

The North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre (NSCEC) project started in July 2007 and to date in output terms has engaged 3665 people in terms of numbers of individuals on their database, with 534 having completed training courses and 281 people moving directly into construction related employment.

Advantages of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The core advantage of the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre as an approach to tackling worklessness is the variety of offer it provides for each individual. The model offers both training and brokerage for and into the construction industry and is based upon effective relationships with both trainers and employers. There are a range of other advantages of the project in tackling worklessness and unemployment:

- ❑ **a project based upon wider regenerative consultation** – the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is closely linked to the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder and major regeneration body for the area, RENEW North Staffordshire. The project was largely formed as a result of community consultation undertaken as part of the RENEW programme which identified a significant demand from local people to be engaged in local construction jobs and the subsequent regeneration process. The process of consultation enabled demand to be identified and the project tailored accordingly;
- ❑ **a project that recognised both demand and supply** – as well as the demand for employment in the construction trade identified through community consultation, the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre project also recognised that there was a significant supply of construction jobs in the North Staffordshire area as a result of physical regeneration activity. This recognition of supply and demand is recognised in the two-pronged approach of the project which sought to both up-skill local residents and broker relations with key construction related employers;
- ❑ **a two-pronged approach** – the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre offers a two-pronged approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment. It firstly provides opportunities for the local unemployed to access accredited training related to construction. It secondly works with the individuals and private sector construction contractors to broker employment opportunities. This brokerage is the real added value of the project and is reflected in the positive numbers of individuals which have been brokered into employment. Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire have sought to work with further construction

contractors to support the brokerage element of the project, but this has proven difficult given the current economic climate;

- ❑ **strong strategic linkages** – the fact that the concept of the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is based upon a partnership model is important for Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire in strategic linkage terms. The project is closely linked to the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP) which also has a strong employment and skills remit. Construction is also one of the five key industrial sectors for growth identified by the NSRP. Indeed the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is in the NSRP business plan as a strategic partner in employment and skills delivery. The project also forms part of the delivery plan of the Local Area Agreement for Stoke on Trent and is integrated against national performance indicators: 152,161, 162 and 163;
- ❑ **an open approach** – unlike many worklessness and employment projects which are targeted at specific groups such as NEETs or the over 50's, the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is open to a cross-section of the local community and particularly those which are long-term unemployed. This openness of the project enabled the positive outputs that have been identified. The geography of targeting participants has however been to a degree influenced by funding sources. Where NRF, for example, has provided funding the project has had to be tailored to specific deprived wards. Advantage West Midlands funding however enables the project to operate across North Staffordshire;
- ❑ **a complementarity to other schemes and training** – the training offered through the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre is designed to complement rather than compete against other provision through local colleges and construction organisations themselves. The project provides a host of training accreditations that enables participants to move directly into employment once courses are complete, including being an accredited CSCS card testing centre;
- ❑ **employment is not the sole objective** – the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre also recognises that outputs are not the sole measure of the success of a project. This is reflected in the variety of options available to participants in training terms. These options include both basic trade skills and the opportunity for placements and pre-apprenticeships to be brokered, plus information, advice and guidance rather than just employment.

Negatives of the project as an approach to tackling worklessness and unemployment

The above section has demonstrated the key advantages that an industry focused approach, namely the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre has in tackling worklessness and unemployment. There are however the following disadvantages and stumbling blocks to the approach:

- ❑ **a high volume of people registering** – in an area of high worklessness and unemployment there is clearly high demand for any intervention providing training and subsequent brokerage into employment. This has been a particular issue with the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre. The high volume of participants presents Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire with challenges around capacity to deliver the service and subsequently ensuring that the delivery is personalised to the individual participant;
- ❑ **a need for better procurement support** – whilst strategic engagement for Groundwork Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire through the North Staffordshire Construction Employment Centre has been positive, there is a feeling that more strategic support is required particularly with regard to procurement. The project is designed to support local North Staffordshire people into local construction employment. This brokerage could be more easily enabled through local labour clauses in contract agreements offered by local authorities and organisations such as RENEW North Staffordshire. This is reflected in the continued high number of external construction companies operating in the area utilising external labour.

3.6.2 Summary of approach 5 – tackling worklessness through industry specific approaches

Of all the Groundwork approaches and projects to tackling worklessness and unemployment examined in this research, the industry specific approach appears to have the most demand from participants and the most value in terms of participants involved and participants moving into employment. The majority of industry specific projects offered by Groundwork are related to industries such as construction and landscaping, in many cases reflecting a local demand for these types of trades and a supply of employment locally in these fields.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

Over the last ten years, there has been a whole range of programmes, interventions and projects designed to tackle worklessness across the UK. The policy drive for these initiatives has primarily come from the emphasis placed on the issue of worklessness by central government, in particular a number of nationally designed programmes (e.g. New Deal and Pathways to Work). However, a great deal of implementation and project design and delivery has also taken place at the sub-regional, local and neighbourhood levels by stakeholders such as local authorities, health agencies, housing and third sector organisations. All of these programmes, both nationally and locally, have had the overall objective of reducing worklessness and providing people with the skills to enable them to access sustainable employment.

The last two years in particular have seen an increase in central government's commitment towards tackling worklessness. There has been a myriad of policy documentation released with the aim of reforming the welfare system and supporting those that are distant from the labour market back into employment, education and training. This commitment has been accentuated as a result of the recession and the re-emergence in the UK of significant unemployment. What follows is an overview of the key welfare policy documents to have emerged from Government in recent years.

4.1 'Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future'⁴

Following the public consultation on the DWP's Welfare Reform Green Paper, 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' (which began in July 2008), in December 2008 the Government published the Welfare Reform White Paper, 'Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future'. This was a concerted effort by the Government to get the growing workless population off of state benefits and back into work. A major contributor to the ambition of reaching an 80% employment rate 'in our generation', this paper contains a number of radical reforms to make benefit receipt a more active process; to find more jobs, more quickly for the unemployed; to increase employment amongst the disabled and parents; to improve service delivery by encouraging open competition amongst providers; and to simplify the benefits system itself.

Central to the underlying impetus behind the radical reforms proposed within this paper, is the belief that the presence of a welfare state to support people in times of need should not stifle responsibility. This represents a bold policy shift away from supporting a system of inactive benefit receipt, towards one of active job-seeking, up-skilling and participation in work. This shift towards a reformed welfare system is closely linked with a new approach to neighbourhood renewal and the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which now focuses funding on enterprise, skills and worklessness rather than holistic regeneration. Both of these approaches highlight the new emphasis by the Government on the centrality of skills, entrepreneurialism and a strong labour market for securing the UK's social and economic future.

New expectations of benefit claimants as the Government takes a hard line on inactive receipt of benefits, now requires a considerably greater effort on the part of the claimant to find work and has led to tighter conditions of benefit eligibility. The process of claiming is now characterised by the gradual intensification of support whilst job seeking as time goes on, and the risk of benefit sanctions should any of the job search obligations or skilling activities not be met.

Personalised conditionality and support emerges as a significant theme in the White Paper, with the Government introducing two conditionality groups: the 'work-ready' group and the 'progress to work' group. The 'work-ready' group faces a largely rules-based set of conditionality requirements, based on active job seeking with the aim of achieving a swift return to work. In contrast, the 'progression to work' group require greater time, encouragement and support to return to work.

The Government recognises that the two groups will have different needs and may require differing support to return to work. For example, the 'work-ready' group require the support offered under the current Jobseeker's Allowance scheme, i.e. an immediate and continuous focus on high levels of

⁴ Department for Work and Pensions (2008), *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future* (DWP: HMSO) Accessed at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfare-reform/raising-expectations/fullversion.pdf>

job search, an ability to take up work at the earliest possible opportunity, and self-directed activity to find work. In contrast, the 'progression to work' group would require greater support over a longer period of time in overcoming the barriers they face to employment.

The replacement of Incapacity Benefit with the Employment and Support Allowance is intended as a new temporary benefit for the majority of claimants while they are unable to work. This will involve an obligatory Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to be carried out by medical professionals for all existing and new claimants, in order to gauge the types of work an individual is capable of doing given their personal physical or mental health conditions, rather than viewing one form of incapacity as an obstruction to all types of work. Whilst the WCA will be reviewed regularly to assess changes in health conditions, it will be more difficult to apply this approach to cases of mental health problems where a doctor cannot see the symptoms, and the risk of inaccurate assessment or abuse of the system may be increased. Following the WCA, personalised back to work support will be given based on the successful Pathways to Work model. The central tenet behind this proposal is that participating in work is ultimately beneficial to a person's long-term health, particularly mental health, and hence ESA is seen as an interim benefit.

Getting more parents into work, in line with the Government's goal to eradicate child poverty by 2020, is the focus of a number of measures to promote the economic well-being of children found within the White Paper. For example, the Government will be introducing legislation that will enable advisers to require lone parents with a youngest child aged three or over to undertake work-related activity, a skills health check and training where a lack of skills is identified as a barrier to employment. It is also intended that these arrangements would apply to partners of claimants with young children. The White Paper also reiterates the Government's announcement in June 2008 that in cases where parents are unmarried, joint registration of births by both mother and father will be necessary as an acknowledgement of parental responsibility on both sides.

Achieving better results with service providers by devolving more power to customers, local partnerships and the providers of Government services themselves, is another key focus of the White Paper. The new 'right to bid' process invites providers, both private and third sector, to identify services that they are able to improve to get more people back to work; design the best approaches to delivering these; and submit their proposals to Government for these contracts.

A new regime for problem drug users was announced in the Welfare Reform White Paper. The Government intends to develop a new drug and employment support programme to provide integrated and personalised support for drug users on Jobseeker's Allowance or the new Employment and Support Allowance. This will involve support to stabilise the claimant's drug problem, build self-esteem and confidence, gain skills and also to help address barriers to work such as housing and debt. The new regime will be facilitated by new drug coordinator posts in Jobcentre Plus, funded by the Department of Health, which will be introduced from April 2009.

Despite the radical reforms set out in the Welfare Reform White Paper at this time of economic recession with a real urgency to get as many people as possible into work and prevent the newly unemployed from becoming the new long-term unemployed, there are a number of concerns raised by these proposals. These include concerns that workfare-style approaches have not succeeded in international cases; that the proposals will unfairly disadvantage the needy and widen the gap between rich and poor; that benefit sanctions may actually increase child poverty; that jobs simply are not available in some regions and localities, particularly since recession has set in; that employment found will not be retained as going for inappropriate, undesirable jobs will not be sustainable; that these reforms will not be suitable for people with personal problems such as persistent drug and alcohol abuse, or serious mental health conditions.

Whilst the Government is right to be energetic in tackling the overdependence on state benefits and associated problems, particularly where these are concentrated in highly deprived communities and failing local economies, the situation remains worryingly difficult as the problems caused by a system of conditionality, sanctions and workfare threaten to undermine the very outcomes they hope to achieve, social justice and economic prosperity, by disadvantaging the most vulnerable and in some cases leading to a rise in poverty, crime and disempowerment. These problems and the entire welfare reform agenda are particularly challenging in a period of economic recession when the legitimacy of a hard line approach to unemployment may be completely unacceptable in light of

significant recent job losses, home repossessions and growing financial hardship for millions of people.

4.2 The Working Neighbourhoods Fund

From April 2008, The Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) was implemented to replace the former Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). This was a result of a changing policy emphasis on the centrality of economic inclusion in achieving neighbourhood renewal, local prosperity and increased equality, (at the expense of the former holistic approach to neighbourhood renewal that included funding social and community initiatives).

WNF focuses on two core areas of regeneration, worklessness and low skills, as these are the most significant issues for central government as well as many local practitioners. Hence the Fund provides the resources to achieve the three primary aims of tackling worklessness, increasing enterprise and employment, and addressing low skill levels.

Roll out and implementation

The WNF is worth a total of £1.5 billion over the next three years: £450 million in 2008/09; £500 million in 2009/10, and over £500 million in 2010/11. Funds are allocated to local authorities dependent upon their rank in the Indices of Deprivation 2007, using this as a measure of who the neediest authorities are. The WNF will provide funding to 66 local authorities in 2008/09 and 2009/10, together with funding to 21 transitional authorities. Transitional authorities are those that formerly received NRF but are no longer eligible for funding under WNF because they did not rank highly enough on the Indices of Deprivation. These authorities will no longer receive the WNF from 2010/11, and include (surprisingly) Leeds and Bristol, both large metropolitan areas and core cities, and Kirklees, Wakefield and Mansfield, former industrial and manufacturing towns.

The role of the local authority in distributing and designing programmes for the WNF is to consult with public, private, and voluntary and community sector partners to develop targets and implementation plans for activities related to worklessness, low skills and low levels of enterprise. Targets are then negotiated with Government Offices through the LAA process, with the strong expectation that authorities in receipt of the WNF will include targets on tackling worklessness in their chosen 35 indicators against which they are measured. The added value of WNF as a funding stream is that it is not ringfenced, thus enabling local flexibility in its distribution and its spend upon activities.

Controversy

The implementation of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund has been controversial with concerns being voiced from many public and third sector organisations regarding the narrow focus and economic-centricity of the new Fund. It is feared that, as social and community based initiatives are no longer offered funding, renewal will not be sustainable because a holistic approach to regeneration is not being allowed. Also, the viability of many social enterprises and charities will be seriously challenged if they cannot get funding to operate, unless they successfully adapt to become deliverers of economic initiatives, which then abandons social regeneration further.

Reward grant

Also being introduced as part of the WNF, is a 'worklessness and enterprise' related reward grant. The Department for Communities and Local Government have allocated at least £50million to deprived areas that agree targets related to worklessness in their LAA. The 'reward grant' will be used by CLG to discuss how this money can be used to motivate areas with the highest levels of worklessness. To alleviate concerns over the new Fund, a role is possible for social enterprise and community enterprise activities to be funded with the reward grant (a sort of secondary funding opportunity – once worklessness is successfully being tackled, community led interventions can be funded).

4.3 'Ready for work: full employment in our generation'⁵

Published in December 2007, 'Ready for work: full employment in our generation' sets out the Government's ambition to raise the employment rate from 74% to 80%. The report is underpinned by a number of key principles that have been recurrent in recent employment policy. This includes the importance of raising the employment rate in order to compete in the global economy; a shift from benefit claimants as passive recipients to active jobseekers and an emphasis on rights and responsibilities; and the assertion that Jobcentre Plus will remain at the heart of the system.

Integrating employment and skills

A key plank of the strategy is the marrying together of employment and the development of skills. Integral to this is, again, the partnership between Jobcentre Plus and employers, which highlights the enhanced role of employers in nurturing a skilled workforce. The Government proposes a number of measures to promote this, including:

- **skills screening and Skills Health Checks** – in future, all benefit claimants will be signposted to the full range of services provided by the new adult advancement and careers service;
- **a new adult advancement and careers service** – trialled over the next two years, the new service will be fully introduced from 2010-11 and will see Learndirect and Nextstep advisory services combining within a new organisation;
- **new Skills Accounts** – Skills Accounts will provide individuals with an induction pack and a personalised learning and career plan;
- **Employability Skills Programme** – the programme aims to improve literacy, numeracy and language skills, and offers participants the chance to gain an employability qualification, whilst also supporting them to find sustainable employment with training.

Sustainable employment for jobseekers

Tackling long-term unemployment amongst benefit claimants remains a key priority, with the Government particularly keen to break the cycle of short-term work interspersed by periods of claiming benefits. As such the report recommended that support for jobseekers is more flexible and personalised; involve identifying early on any basic literacy, language or skills needs; and to encourage progression at work, the Government proposed that jobseekers have access to pre-employment training and basic skills provision.

Sustainable employment for lone parents

An important element of the Government's strategy is to help more lone parents find and sustain employment. A number of measures are set out to enable lone parents to move into employment: the aim that by 2010 every school in England is an 'extended school' that offer access to childcare and supervised activities outside school hours; the extension of the right of employees to request

⁵ DWP (2007), *Ready for work: full employment in our generation'* (DWP: HMSO) Accessed at: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/readyforwork/readyforwork.pdf>

flexible working hours; and additional support to help lone parents move into work such as pre-employment training and group seminars for lone parents.

4.4 'Tackling Worklessness: A review of the contribution and role of English local authorities and partnerships'⁶

In May 2008, Councillor Stephen Houghton, Leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, was commissioned to develop a report examining how local authorities in England, and their partners, can do more to tackle worklessness. The eagerly anticipated report, published March 2009, makes the case for a 'concerted and sustained' (p.4) partnership across national, regional and local levels, and emphasises the important role that local authorities and LSPs play in tackling worklessness; recommending that it becomes a mainstream objective. Published at a time of heightened anxiety over the state of the global and UK economies, with unemployment rates rising, Houghton's report, 'Tackling Worklessness: A review of the contribution and role of English local authorities and partnerships'⁷, is particularly pertinent. In light of the economic climate, Houghton makes the case for maintaining efforts to tackle worklessness, and whilst responding to recent job losses and rising unemployment is important, this must not be at the expense of those furthest from the labour market. The report makes a number of recommendations including:

Localised approaches

Houghton makes recommendations for the delivery of more personalised and localised services, thus 'providing what individuals need to increase their employability' (p.19). As the Houghton Report also highlights, 'the importance of localising and personalising services is reinforced when we consider the needs of ethnic minority communities' (p.26), which face a number of distinct barriers to entering the labour market.

Developing the Working Neighbourhoods Fund

The Houghton report argues that, whilst welcoming the flexibility for local authorities to use WNF funding as they see fit, and therefore the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of devolution and greater flexibility; there is, however, no consistent way of communicating the benefits to the Government. As such, Houghton is anxious that the 'lack of reporting requirements and transparency has left the fund open to undue and unspecific challenge' (p.30).

A new framework to demonstrate contribution

Houghton suggests that a new framework ought to be developed in order to allow local authorities and their partners to demonstrate the contribution they are making to tackling worklessness. The three characteristics of this framework would be:

- ❑ the requirement for local authorities to undertake a Worklessness Assessment as part of their Economic Assessment Duty;
- ❑ for local partners (such as local authorities, the Primary Care Trust and Registered Social Landlords) to develop Work and Skills Plans that explore how best to tackle worklessness, increase skills, and boost levels of enterprise;
- ❑ the introduction of a Work and Skills Integrated Budget that would, over time, form the basis for aligning and pooling funding and facilitating joint commissioning.

Local authorities as employers and procurers

A key theme to emerge from the Houghton Report is that of the role of local authorities as employers and procurers, particularly in terms of how this role may enable local authorities to help tackle unemployment and worklessness in their locality. The report advocates that local authorities write community benefit clauses into their contracts, whilst other efforts to tackle unemployment and worklessness could be through offering apprenticeships and training placement opportunities. Houghton also recommends that local authorities do more to help support the voluntary sector and social enterprise in their locality.

⁶ Houghton, S. et al (2009) 'Tackling Worklessness: A review of the contribution and role of English local authorities and partnerships' (CLG: HMSO) accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1161160.pdf>

⁷ Houghton, S. et al (2009) Tackling Worklessness: a review of the contribution and role of English local authorities and partnerships (CLG: HMSO) accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1161160.pdf>

5 WHAT NEXT FOR GROUNDWORK IN WORKLESSNESS INTERVENTIONS?

5.1 Recommendations for future Groundwork worklessness interventions

Developing a typology

This research set out to bring together and analyse the examples of programmes, projects and approaches undertaken by Groundwork that deliver on unemployment and worklessness related activities. By analysing a number of project case studies from Groundwork Trusts across England, it soon became clear that the projects demonstrate a wide range of positive impacts. These included positive outcomes for participants, such as the acquisition of new skills, qualifications and opportunities; as well as wider positive effects on the local economy, such as raising local employment levels and helping local employers overcome skills gaps. In addition to the measurable or 'hard' outcomes, there were also a number of positive impacts around quality of life, with participants often benefiting from an increase in confidence and self-esteem and improved mental and physical health. The projects we looked at also exemplify the way in which Groundwork have the potential to have a significant impact on local strategy; particularly around raising employment and skills levels and also helping to tackle levels of young people that are NEET.

From our analysis of the projects, that aimed to tackle unemployment and worklessness in both responsive and preventative ways, we then developed a typology of approaches, which are as follows:

- ❑ tackling worklessness through volunteering;
- ❑ tackling worklessness through brokerage;
- ❑ tackling worklessness through training, vocation and placements;
- ❑ tackling worklessness through tackling NEET;
- ❑ tackling worklessness through industry specific approaches.

Drawing on case studies of relevant projects we were able to identify a number of significant advantages to each approach; however there are nevertheless a number of challenges identified when delivering such projects. We can therefore suggest a number of recommendations as to how Groundwork can deliver projects in the future:

- ❑ **recognise the significance of the economic recession** – perhaps the most significant challenge facing Groundwork Trusts is that of how to deliver projects that aim to tackle unemployment and worklessness in the context of economic recession. As unemployment rises, Groundwork Trusts are likely to see an increase in demand for their services, which will undoubtedly raise capacity issues. Furthermore, a decrease in job vacancies may threaten the viability of job brokerage schemes. To overcome this challenge, Groundwork Trusts ought to establish new links with employers and develop new services for clients including further developing apprenticeship, training and placement services;
- ❑ **respond directly to emerging policy** – as section four outlines, in the last two years we have witnessed a plethora of employment and worklessness related policy emerge from central government. It is important for Groundwork to keep up to date on new policy developments and to correlate their service offer accordingly. For example, Groundwork UK is well placed to respond to Stephen Houghton's recommendation that unemployed people could be given the opportunity for work placements in so-called 'green jobs'. Indeed this activity is ongoing at the Groundwork UK level;
- ❑ **continue to provide both responsive and preventative approaches** – as evidenced in our typology, Groundwork Trusts offer a broad range of approaches to tackling unemployment and worklessness. This includes both responsive projects, such as brokerage, training and placements, and also preventative projects such as those that engage with young people;
- ❑ **recognise the value of partnerships and strategic links** – a number of case studies analysed in our research demonstrate the value of forging effective partnerships with local schools,

businesses, and services such as Connexions. It is therefore recommended that Groundwork Trusts continue to build on these links; not only for the benefit of developing strategy but also in order to diversify funding sources which, in the current economic climate, will become increasingly important;

- ❑ **ensure projects are relevant to local issues and clients** – many of the projects explored in this report were developed in response to local demand, for example high levels of unemployment or young people that are NEET. To maintain the relevance of service delivery, it is important that Groundwork Trusts continue to understand their local areas; both in terms of their clients' needs and the particular socio-economic characteristics of their locality. For example, the needs of unemployed people aged 50 and over are likely to be different to the needs of younger people. Furthermore, developing a good understanding of the local industrial base will enable Groundwork Trusts to ensure that their service delivery matches up with the demands of local employers;
- ❑ **recognise and promote the local, economic and social impacts of Groundwork Trusts' activity** – this research presents an array of projects that demonstrate the economic and social impact that Groundwork Trusts can have on local communities and local places. It is important that Groundwork Trusts recognise and promote the added value that their projects deliver;
- ❑ **continue to tackle the root causes of worklessness** – as identified earlier in the report, worklessness is a highly heterogeneous issue, and there are often a number of contributing factors that lead an individual to become long-term unemployed. It is therefore recommended that Groundwork Trusts work to address the root causes of worklessness, for example delivering services that improve people's health and well-being, raising individuals' aspirations or working to engage with young people that are at risk of becoming NEET;
- ❑ **recognise the important role of the personal adviser** – personal advisers play a highly significant role in supporting those furthest from the labour market into education, training, or employment; both in terms of helping individuals overcome personal barriers and also in practical ways, such as signposting individuals towards education, training or employment opportunities. Groundwork Trusts ought to continue to invest in staff so that they can deliver this role, or build on links with other organisations and partners;
- ❑ **recognise that worklessness is about both supply and demand** – supply side interventions help to better equip the workforce to secure jobs, whilst demand side interventions include job intervention, support for business start-up, and enhancing workless individuals' access to local jobs. It is important for Groundwork Trusts to recognise that both supply and demand issues are important to tackling worklessness;
- ❑ **realise the potential of Groundwork as an employer** – Groundwork has great potential to help reduce unemployment and worklessness in its capacity as an employer. This could be achieved by joining a Local Employment Partnership or by developing a Skills Pledge.