



University
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Research Unit

**EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY RENEWAL'S
AREA FOCUS PROJECTS IN EDINBURGH**

FINAL REPORT

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. OVERVIEW OF AREA FOCUS PROJECT APPROACH	4
3. ANALYSIS OF DATA	8
4. VIEWS OF AREA FOCUS CLIENTS	18
5. VIEWS OF AREA FOCUS PARTNERS	31
6. CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING	37
APPENDIX 1: CLIENT CASE STUDIES	45
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	78

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Within the framework of Edinburgh's Joined Up for Jobs Strategy, Capital City Partnership (CCP) commissioned Community Renewal to deliver two Area Focus Projects.

- The Muirhouse project began in April 2008.
- The Craigmillar project began in November 2008.

The projects were commissioned in recognition of the high and entrenched levels of worklessness within some communities in Edinburgh. As such, the areas selected for Area Focus Projects were those with the highest levels of worklessness in Edinburgh. In particular, there was to be a focus on engaging and moving forward the large numbers on non-active benefits (such as Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support). This reflected the increasing policy focus on those on non-Jobseekers Allowance benefits alongside a realisation that reducing worklessness in Edinburgh would require making substantial in-roads into these groups. The Area Focus approach was designed in recognition that these clients were less likely to engage in traditional employability services.

Brief

Capital City Partnership and Community Renewal Ltd have commissioned this evaluation of the Area Focus Projects on behalf of the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group. The evaluation brief states that the **purpose** of the evaluation is to:

'Assist the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group in mainstreaming an engagement, assessment and case management approach through the Strategic Skills Pipeline proposed for the city.'

The evaluation is expected to contribute to the following **objectives**:

- *'Test the added value of the Area Focus projects in terms of increasing the number of workless people accessing support and services that they wouldn't have otherwise. These do not necessarily have to be employment-focused given the remit of Community Renewal. There are wider objectives, for example related to tenants of local housing associations.'*
- *Draw conclusions based on the work done by Community Renewal about the best way to work with those who are not engaging with access to work services and how this might be integrated into a city-wide approach.*
- *Evaluate the extent and effectiveness of the projects' partnership working in each area.*
- *Suggest a methodology for integrating the area focus approach into Edinburgh's proposed Strategic Skills Pipeline.'*

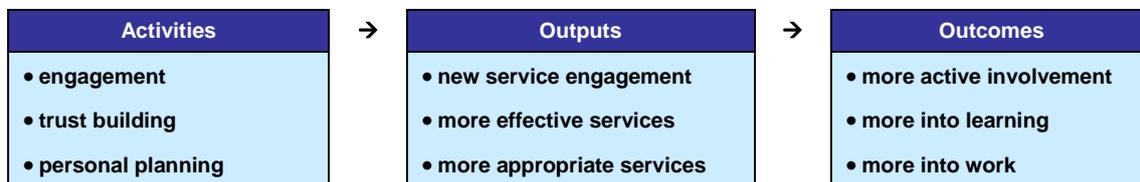
Logic Chain Approach

It is increasingly fashionable in evaluation work to deploy the logic chain approach. Effectively, this shows the connections between activities, outputs and outcomes.

- The Community Renewal approach is captured in very simple terms under the various activities, and only a few illustrations are given here.
- As a result of these activities, a number of clients access new services or more appropriate services and they may engage with services more quickly than they would otherwise have done even if it was in their mind to engage.
- As a result of the initial activities and the subsequent outputs, more clients achieve what would be regarded as positive outcomes. In simple terms they may simply become more active – they are out of the house more, engaging in a wider range of activities, working harder on behalf of themselves and

their families, etc. In more specific instances, they may have re-engaged with learning and/or they may have moved into work.

The task of the evaluation is to tease out the nature of these linkages flowing from the Community Renewal Area Focus Projects, and also the extent of the changes in terms of outputs and outcomes.



Research Methods

As the Area Focus Projects are a relatively complex intervention, a number of different approaches are required to assess the added value of the approach and to make recommendations on how it could be integrated into the Strategic Skills Pipeline. The following research methods have been used, enabling a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis to be undertaken:

- Analysis of project documentation and interviews with project staff, funders and stakeholders have been used to develop a clear understanding of the Area Focus approach.
- Project monitoring data has been analysed, providing insights into the activities and outputs of the project, as well as providing data on the clients that are being assisted. This is important as the Area Focus Projects should be engaged with harder to reach client groups with more disadvantaged characteristic sets.
- The views of clients have been gathered through a series of 12 focus groups alongside some one-to-one interviews held in the Area Focus Project offices. At the start of each focus group/interview, a short questionnaire was administered to capture some information on an individual basis. By combining focus groups with a short questionnaire, it is possible to capture both qualitative and quantitative feedback on the value of the Projects to clients.
- In addition to the focus groups, 20 in-depth case studies of client journeys – from initial engagement to current outcomes – were undertaken. The advantage of developing case studies is that they present the clearest possible picture of how the process looks from the client perspective and they present this image in a way which cannot be captured by tabular statistical analysis.
- As one of the objectives of the Area Focus Projects is to connect clients with a range of services which can provide significant benefit for them and their families, but which they are not currently accessing for a variety of reasons, the final element of the primary fieldwork was to interview a range of service providers. Key issues discussed included:
 - The extent to which they have seen an increased flow of clients as a result of the work carried out by the Area Focus Projects.
 - Whether they are seeing different sorts of clients coming through as a result of the Area Focus Projects.
 - What lessons, if any, they have learnt about effective engagement with harder to reach clients and whether they have begun to change their engagement processes.

This final part of the evaluation involved weighing the different pieces of the evaluation evidence to draw out the overarching conclusions and provide recommendations around a methodology for integrating the Area Focus approach into the Strategic Skills Pipeline. This has involved:

- Pulling together the key messages from the evaluation and scoping out some options around the methodology.
- Holding two sessions to feed back the key evaluation messages and the different options for integrating elements of the Area Focus approach into the Strategic Skills Pipeline. One session was held with the Joined Up for Jobs Offers Delivery Group and one was held with representatives from Capital City Partnership, City of Edinburgh Council and Community Renewal.

Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an **overview of the Area Focus Project approach**;
- Chapter 3 provides an **analysis of data**;
- Chapter 4 discusses the **views of Area Focus clients**;
- Chapter 5 considers the **views of Area Focus partners**; and
- Chapter 6 outlines the **conclusions and options for mainstreaming**.

2. OVERVIEW OF AREA FOCUS PROJECT APPROACH

Area Focus Project Approach

The Area Focus Project is described in its *Edinburgh City Jobs Strategy: Project Brief Proforma* as:

- “An engagement, guidance and support project mainly in North Edinburgh and Craigmillar combining:
 - A community based engagement process (using community engagement workers)
 - The provision of a holistic assessment (health, mental wellbeing, employability, financial)
 - A case management approach to support and provision
 - Close inter-agency working”.

The Area Focus Projects are delivered by Community Renewal and reflect the practice that they have developed over the last 8 years working in range of deprived communities across Scotland and the UK. Community Renewal’s approach is shown in broad terms in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Community Renewal Approach



There are a number of key elements to the Area Focus Project approach.

Works Intensively in Very Small Areas

Initially, the Area Focus Projects were working in just 2 datazones in Muirhouse (plus two blocks of houses in a third datazone) and 3 datazones in Craigmillar. Three additional datazones were added with Wider Role funding. By working in small areas, the hope is that it will be possible to make a much more substantial – and sustainable – impact than if resources are spread over a wider area. For example,

positive experiences for clients can be rapidly spread to family members, friends and neighbours creating a more responsive environment for further engagement by the Area Focus Projects and other relevant agencies.

Proactive in Engaging Clients

Most employability initiatives (and indeed most service providers in other fields) rely on clients approaching them or being referred by another agency. The Area Focus Projects take a different approach and are proactive in trying to engage residents in the Project.

The main mechanism used is the 'listening survey'. Project staff are allocated a number of houses/flats to cover and 'door-knock'. When residents answer, the Project staff introduce themselves and explain that they are undertaking a survey of residents. The listening survey helps them to start a conversation about what residents think of the local area, their personal circumstances and the things that they would like to change – either for themselves or the community. The staff use the responses to try to engage the resident in the Project – for example, if they are interested in getting into work, they will outline the help the Project can provide. Critically, the staff will use the listening survey as a starting point and usually arrange to go back to see the individual at some point in the next few weeks (or days if appropriate). Whilst a small number of clients will come into the Project offices after the initial contact, it is more common for the staff to have met with them a few times before they engage. Once the client has engaged, the personal planning process is carried out to help identify what the client wishes to achieve and the support they will need to achieve this.

The main advantages of this approach are that:

- Unlike with more top-down approaches, the contact is with individuals in their own environments.
- The process is focused on building the trust of the individual and centres on them as an individual – i.e. their interests, their aspirations, their assets, etc.

The other main mechanism that the Area Focus Projects use to engage clients is posting job vacancies and training/volunteering opportunities into their window (Muirhouse) or on a noticeboard outside their premises (Craigmillar). Residents will stop to look at these – and either come into the offices to enquire or are approached by Project staff. This approach is more effective in Muirhouse than in Craigmillar as the Muirhouse premises are in a shopping precinct, whilst the Craigmillar office is on a residential street.

Being proactive continues beyond the initial engagement, with staff continuing to follow-up with clients once they are engaged. For example, if they identify a job opportunity that they believe an individual may be interested in they will call the client to tell them about it or if they haven't seen a client for a while will give them a call to check if they are OK.

Based in Heart of Community

The Area Focus Projects are based in the heart of the communities they serve in three ways.

- Firstly, their offices are based within the communities. This makes it easy for clients to access Area Focus services – and as a result, they will use them on a regular basis.
- Secondly, the Area Focus Projects have organised a number of community activities including a community clean-up, gardening club, women's club,

summer fete, etc. These have been developed in response to issues that were raised in the listening survey.

- Thirdly – and potentially most importantly – is the approach taken by the Area Focus Projects. In contrast to many other projects where support is provided on a rigid basis (e.g. need an appointment), clients are able to drop into the Area Focus Project for a chat, coffee or to use the phone or computer. This helps create the impression that the Project is a resource **for the community** – rather than a service being delivered to it.

Offer Employability Services but Not Just About Employability

Whilst initially funded as an employability project, the Area Focus Projects have never taken a rigid employability focus and clients approach the Projects for help with a wide range of issues (including problems with benefits, debt, housing and health) in addition to help with getting back into work. By assisting individuals to address the issues that are important to them, the Area Focus Projects are able to built trust with individuals and the community.

Helps Individuals Access Other Services and Supports

Following the initial assessment, relevant agencies are introduced to help the individual achieve their objectives. This can take the form of either:

- Referrals to other services.
- Other services delivering support services to Area Focus Project clients from the Project offices.

Down the line, the hope is that the individual clients will progress in various ways through accessing services that support their various needs. One outcome could be work, but more broadly the purpose is to help clients on a journey which will make them more resilient and allow them to make the best use of their personal assets.

Rationale for Funding

The Area Focus Projects have received funding from three sources:

- Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group;
- Edinburgh Community Health Partnership; and
- Wider Role Fund (accessed by Castlerock Edinvar and Muirhouse Housing Association).

The rationale for funding the Area Focus Projects is slightly different in each case and it is worthwhile outlining these differing objectives here:

- The Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Groups wished to increase the number of individuals from disadvantaged groups and areas accessing employability services, with a perception that those on non-Jobseekers Allowance benefits had not received sufficient support in the past. They had become aware of the approach through a conference and developed a project specification that was put out to tender. Joined Up for Jobs was the initial funder.
- A well established community health project operating in Craigmillar had recently closed and Edinburgh CHP was exploring how this provision could be replaced. However, it was also taking this opportunity to review what would be the most appropriate provision to tackle health issues in this deprived area going forward. Through the CHP's involvement in Joined Up for Jobs, it became aware of the Area Focus Projects and felt it was a 'good fit' to what they needed. In particular, its intensive support targeted at a small number of clients alongside their focus on case management was seen as being of particular value.
- Both Castlerock Edinvar and Muirhouse Housing Association view their role as place managers rather than just housing providers and have taken a role

in regenerating the areas they are working in. Both see value in funding an organisation that can provide support to local residents to help them move forward with their lives. This may be about moving into work but may relate to other areas of their life (e.g. health, drugs and alcohol, etc.). The Area Focus Projects seemed to be the best placed organisation to take on this role. In particular, the fact that they were already operating in the adjacent datazones but were not a project with a long term presence in the area (and the associated baggage this brings) were seen as key advantages.

Contribution to Strategic Objectives

The Area Focus approach was initially funded under the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy, the Edinburgh City Jobs Strategy to contribute towards its operational objectives 'Greater Customer Reach'. This objective aims to *"increase the number of people from priority groups and disadvantaged areas accessing employability services"*. The Area Focus Projects should also make a contribution to other Joined Up for Jobs Strategy objectives, such as Health and Employability and More Choices, More Chances.

At a higher level, the Edinburgh Partnership is the Community Planning Partnership for the City of Edinburgh. Edinburgh's current Community Plan focuses on the following four strategic priorities:

- Investment in Prevention and Care Services, Health Improvement and Social Inclusion.
- Maximisation of Land Use and Affordable Housing.
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change.
- Sustainable Economic Growth.

The Area Focus projects should contribute to improved performance in two outcome indicators under the last of these priorities:

- Economic Participation: The performance of Edinburgh's economy is strengthened through the increased economic participation of its population.
- Low-paid: Increase the percentage of the working age population participating in the labour market

In addition, the Area Focus approach will also make contributions to a range of other strategies, such as City of Edinburgh Council's Housing Advice and Information Strategy and the Community Health Partnership's Strategic Framework for Reducing Health Inequalities.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Area Focus Projects Monitoring Data

As the objectives of this study were to evaluate the Area Focus Projects and the added value they bring to Edinburgh, the monitoring data has been analysed for the Area Focus Projects as a whole – i.e. covering all of their activities in the Muirhouse and Craigmillar areas rather than those relating to specific funding streams. As such, the numbers may be slightly different to those reported as part of individual monitoring systems. The analysis included all data collected to end May 2011.

Activities

The Area Focus Projects have had contact with over 2,600 residents of Muirhouse and Craigmillar and engaged over 1,200 clients in their services.

- The Muirhouse project was established first, in April 2008 and has contacted 1,567 residents and engaged 864 of these by end of May 2011.
- The Craigmillar project was established in November 2008 and has contacted 1,086 residents and engaged 378 of these by end of May 2011.

Figure 2: Engagement

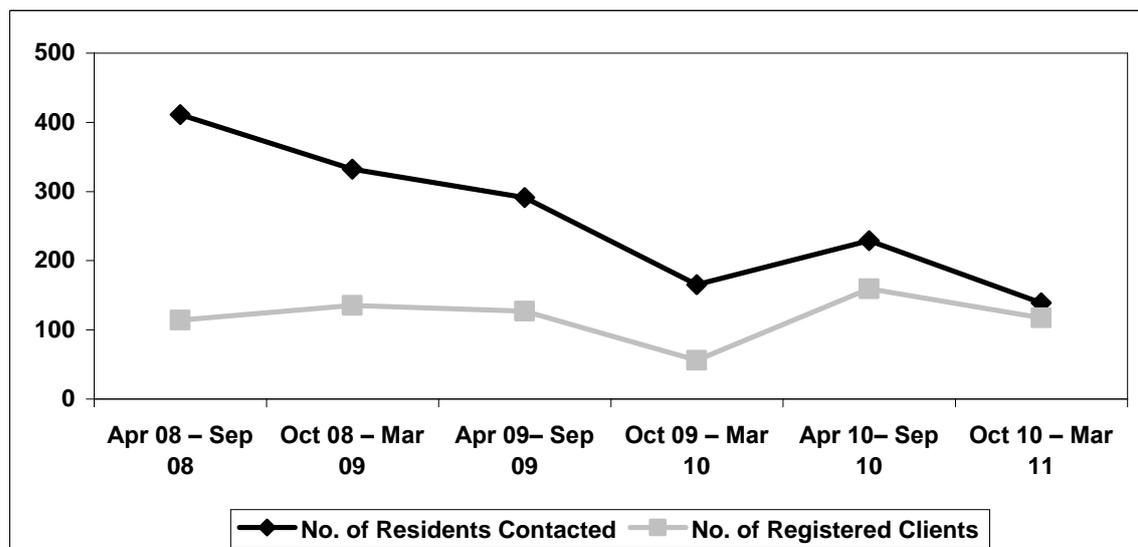
	Muirhouse	Craigmillar	Area Focus Projects
No. of Residents Contacted	1,567	1,086	2,653
No. of Registered Clients	864	378	1,242

These numbers represent a significant proportion of the residents of Muirhouse and Craigmillar.

- There are 2,861 individuals aged 16-64 living in the datazones in Muirhouse covered by the Area Focus Project.
 - 55% have been contacted by the Area Focus Project.
 - 30% have registered with the Project.
- Similarly, there are 2,452 individuals aged 16-64 living in the datazones in Craigmillar.
 - 44% have been contacted by the Area Focus Project.
 - 15% have registered with the Project.

One implication of this very high ‘penetration rate’ is that the number of residents being contacted for the first time is falling over time. This trend is shown for Muirhouse in Figure 3. Data was not available for Craigmillar, but we would anticipate a similar pattern (although given its later start date we would expect the drop-off to be less advanced).

Figure 3: Engagement Over Time, Muirhouse



Looking at the engagement/registration figures in more detail, it is clear that the 'conversation rate' – i.e. the percentage of individuals that are contacted by the Project who subsequently register is substantially lower in Craigmillar than Muirhouse (35% vs. 55%). Again, there may be an element of timing here – with a period of prolonged engagement required before some residents engage and the longer duration of the Muirhouse project may mean that there has been time for these clients to come through. An alternative explanation may be that the clients in Craigmillar are more deprived and therefore more difficult to engage. The analysis of client characteristics that follows would seem to support this view.

As well as examining the numbers of clients contacted and registered, it would be good to be able to analyse the Area Focus Project services that clients use and the agencies that the Projects link clients into. However, monitoring data is currently not available on these elements of the project.

Client Characteristics

Looking at the clients engaged by the Area Focus Projects:

- 56% of clients were male and 44% female. Slightly more males were engaged in Craigmillar than in Muirhouse (59% vs. 55%).
- Only the Muirhouse project was able to provide an age breakdown. This showed that:
 - Just over half (484 clients or 56%) of clients engaged were prime age workers (aged 25-50).
 - A substantial number of young people have also been engaged – 301 individuals aged 24 or under (or 35% of those engaged) including 156 (or 18% of those engaged) aged 19 or under. This group tends to be difficult to engage in services and this finding suggests that the Area Focus Projects have begun to make some in-roads into this group.
- The majority have no or low qualification levels with:
 - 28% of clients having no qualifications;
 - A further 63% having low qualifications (defined as ISCED Level 2 or below);
 - Only 10% had ISCED Level 3 qualifications or above (equivalent to SVQ Level 3 or Higher).

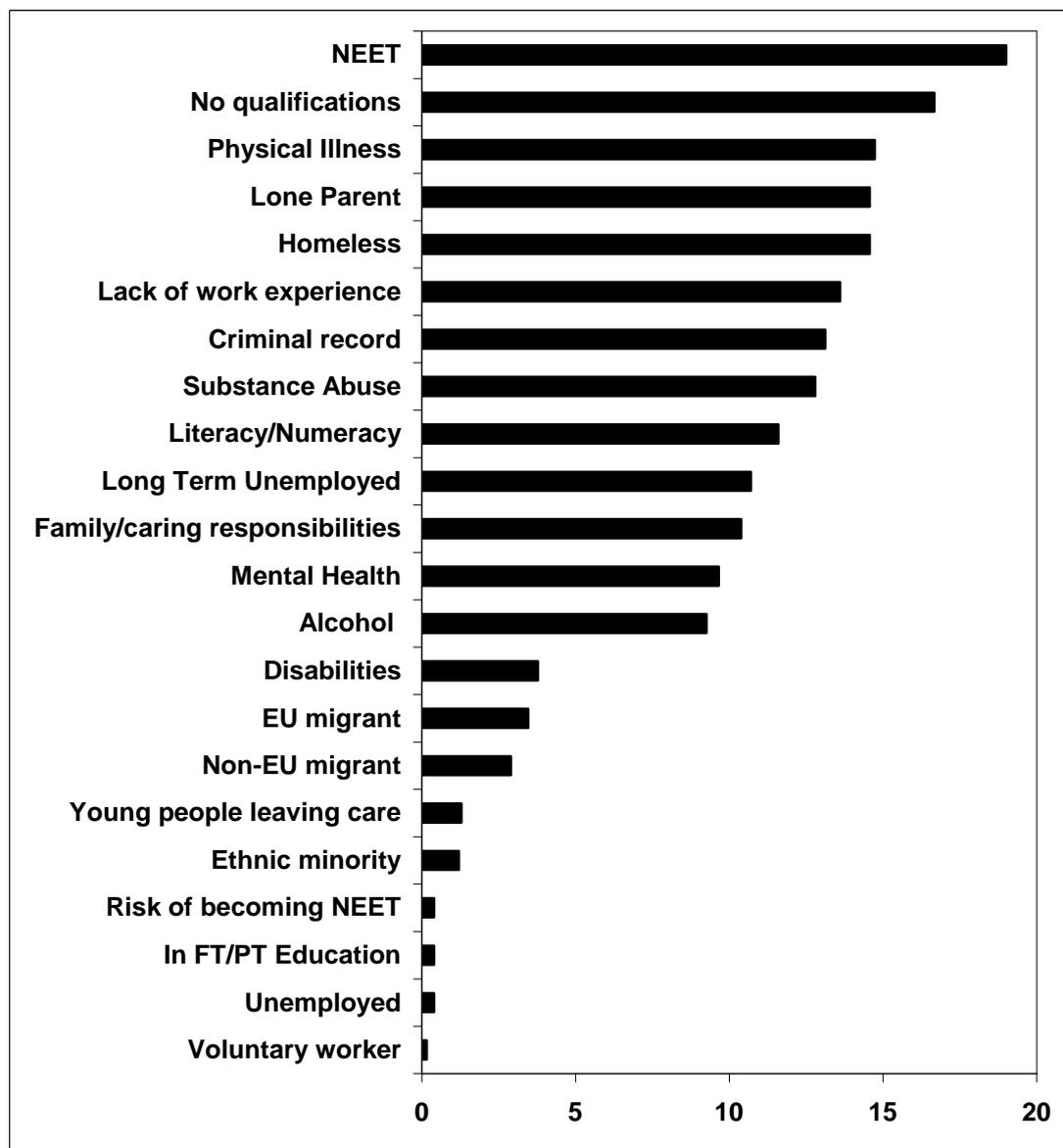
Figure 4: Breakdown of Clients by Level of Qualification

	Muirhouse		Craigmillar		Area Focus Projects	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None	182	21	168	44	350	28
Below Level 1	83	10	68	18	151	12
Level 1	414	48	92	24	506	41
Level 2	93	11	27	7	120	10
Level 3	42	5	15	4	57	5
Level 4	29	3	4	1	33	3
Level 5	22	3	4	1	26	2
Level 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	864	100	378	100	1,242	100

In establishing the Area Focus Projects, Joined Up for Jobs hoped to engage individuals that are not currently engaging with employability (or indeed other) services. By implication, these 'harder to reach' clients are considered to have greater barriers to employment.

The Area Focus Projects do not collect data on whether clients were accessing other services prior to engaging with them, so it is not possible to test the first of these using the monitoring data. They do, however, record details of the barriers faced by individuals (these are classified as the 'Secondary Target Groups' for ESF funding). As Figure 5 shows, and reflecting the age profile outlined above, young people in the MCMC group are the most common 'barrier'. Other common barriers include a lack of qualifications, physical illness, homelessness and being a lone parent. However, even the most common barriers only apply to 10-20% of clients. On average, 1.85 barriers have been identified for each client. This demonstrates the significant diversity of clients within these areas and the need for interventions that take a broad-based and holistic approach.

Figure 5: Breakdown of Clients by Barriers Faced



Note: Defined as ESF 'Secondary Target Group'

There is some variation in the client groups engaging with the two Area Focus Projects with higher concentrations of long term unemployed, individuals with no qualifications and/or a lack of work experience and individuals with criminal records engaging in the Craigmillar project. The average number of barriers is also higher in Craigmillar – 3.17 compared to 1.27 in Muirhouse. These would seem to confirm the views expressed by staff that the Craigmillar 'population' is more deprived than that in Muirhouse. Alternatively:

- It may be that the projects have been more/less successful with different groups
- Recording of barriers may not be consistent across the two projects – although robust processes coupled with staff that have worked in both offices would appear to rule this option out.

Figure 6: Breakdown of Clients by Barriers Faced

	Muirhouse		Craigmillar		Area Focus Projects	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
NEET	151	17	85	22	236	19
No qualifications	21	2	186	49	207	17
Physical Illness	119	14	64	17	183	15
Homeless	122	14	59	16	181	15
Lone Parent	135	16	46	12	181	15
Lack of work experience	4	0	165	44	169	14
Criminal record	91	11	72	19	163	13
Substance Abuse	96	11	63	17	159	13
Literacy/Numeracy	100	12	44	12	144	12
Long Term Unemployed	1	0	132	35	133	11
Family/caring responsibilities	70	8	59	16	129	10
Mental Health	60	7	60	16	120	10
Alcohol	62	7	53	14	115	9
Disabilities	2	0	45	12	47	4
EU migrant	23	3	20	5	43	3
Non-EU migrant	26	3	10	3	36	3
Young people leaving care	6	1	10	3	16	1
Ethnic minority	3	0	12	3	15	1
Unemployed	0	0	5	1	5	0
In FT/PT Education	0	0	5	1	5	0
Risk of becoming NEET	5	1	0	0	5	0
Voluntary worker	0	0	2	1	2	0

Note: Defined as ESF 'Secondary Target Group'

Figure 7 shows:

- The numbers claiming a range of DWP out-of-work benefits in the datazones the Area Focus Projects are operating in. The data for February 2008 are presented as this is the last quarter available prior to the commencement of the project in April 2008.
- How many clients were claiming each of these benefits at the point of registering with the Area Focus Projects.

In both Muirhouse and Craigmillar, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)/Incapacity Benefit (IB) is the most common benefit being claimed. In both areas, roughly 10% of all ESA/IB claimants have registered with the project. Lone parents benefit claimants are the next largest group – and there is a varied picture here with 33% of lone parents in Craigmillar and 88% of lone parents in Muirhouse registering. Given the significant and entrenched problems facing the populations of Muirhouse and Craigmillar, most of the residents that are claiming benefits are on these 'inactive benefits', with just 290 residents on Jobseekers Allowance at

February 2008. Over the course of the Area Focus Projects' life, they have engaged with well over 100% of the number of claimants at February 2008 – reflecting the fact that there is a high 'churn' rate amongst this group with individuals moving in and out of employment over the life of the project. Looking forward, one area Community Renewal should look at is how to engage a larger proportion of those on Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance.

Figure 7: Clients on DWP Working Age Out-of-Work Benefits at Engagement

	Muirhouse			Craigmillar		
	JSA	ESA/IB	Lone Parent	JSA	ESA/IB	Lone Parent
No. on Benefit at Feb 2008	180	510	185	110	565	180
No. Engaged by Area Focus Project	318	40	163	130	60	60
% of Benefit Claimants Engaged	176	8	88	118	11	33

Outcomes

Turning to the project outcomes:

- 291 individuals have entered employment
- 149 have entered education/training
- 77 have participated in community activities and
- 70 have entered volunteering.

Given the barriers faced by the Area Focus Project client groups, these are substantial. However, given the Area Focus Projects' approach outlined in Chapter 2, there are likely to be a range of other benefits that are not captured here, including increased self-confidence and motivation, greater clarity about what want to achieve and the steps required to achieve this, etc. The Area Focus Projects do not currently collate data on these aspects of delivery and this is perhaps an area to consider going forward.

Figure 8: Outcomes, All Clients

	Muirhouse		Craigmillar		Area Focus Projects	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Entering Employment	209	24	82	22	291	23
Entering Education/Training	82	9	67	18	149	12
Involved in Community Activities	45	5	32	8	77	6
Volunteering	35	4	35	9	70	6
Pre-Vocational Outcomes	34	4	24	6	58	5
Gaining Partial/Full Qualification	27	3	0	0	27	2

As outlined earlier, 35% of clients registered with the Muirhouse project are aged 24 or less and being a young person not in employment, education or training (NEET) is the most common barrier recorded for Community Renewal clients. Given Community Renewal's success in engaging with young people, it is worth

considering whether it is also having success in moving these clients into employment, education/training or other activities. As Figure 9 shows:

- 127 young people (or 28% of young people registered with the project) have entered employment
- 86 (19%) have entered education/training
- 17 (4%) have participated in community activities
- 18 (4%) have entered volunteering
- 15 (3%) have achieved a pre-vocational outcome.

Comparison to 'all clients', young people appear to be slightly more likely to report outcomes across all categories. There is a very similar pattern of outcomes across younger and older age groups (i.e. comparing 15/16-19 year olds to 20-24 year olds) and areas (Muirhouse vs. Craigmillar). The only notable differences are:

- 27% of 15/16-19 year olds had entered education and training compared to just 10% of 20-24 year olds.
- Young people in Craigmillar are more likely to participated in community activities than those in Muirhouse (7% vs. 2%) although the numbers are small here.

Figure 9: Outcomes, Young People

	Muirhouse		Craigmillar		Area Focus Projects	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Aged 15/16-19</i>						
Entering Employment	42	27	26	31	68	28
Entering Education/Training	36	23	28	34	64	27
Involved in Community Activities	1	1	8	10	9	4
Volunteering	4	3	4	5	8	3
Pre-Vocational Outcomes	3	2	5	6	8	3
<i>Aged 20-24</i>						
Entering Employment	41	28	18	28	59	28
Entering Education/Training	16	11	6	9	22	10
Involved in Community Activities	5	3	3	5	8	4
Volunteering	8	6	2	3	10	5
Pre-Vocational Outcomes	5	3	2	3	7	3
<i>Aged 15/16-24</i>						
Entering Employment	83	27	44	30	127	28
Entering Education/Training	52	17	34	23	86	19
Involved in Community Activities	6	2	11	7	17	4
Volunteering	12	4	6	4	18	4
Pre-Vocational Outcomes	8	3	7	5	15	3

Notes:

1. Age at registration
2. Younger age group – Data for Muirhouse is 16-19; Data for Craigmillar – 15-19
3. Some clients have achieved multiple outcomes – i.e. entered education and volunteering.
4. No data was provided in relation to qualifications.

Impacts

Given that positive outcome figures, we would expect to see a decline in the numbers claiming DWP out-of-work benefits over time. Figure 10 compares benefit claimants in February 2008 (the quarter before the Area Focus Project in Muirhouse opened) to November 2010 (the latest quarter available). Data for Edinburgh and Scotland is provided as a benchmark. The key points to note are:

- Over the period February 2008 to November 2010, the numbers claiming out of work benefits increased across Edinburgh and Scotland as a whole (by 8.6% and 6.9% respectively), reflecting the impact of the recession on the labour market. Whilst the numbers claiming benefits also rose in Craigmillar, the rise was much more modest – 2.8% – than in Edinburgh or Scotland. In Muirhouse, the numbers claiming benefits actually fell during this period.
- In particular, there have been substantial falls in the lone parent category (predominately claiming Income Support). There has been a decline of 22% in Craigmillar and 46% in Muirhouse, compare to declines of 14% in both Edinburgh and Scotland.
- There also appear to be larger declines in the numbers claiming Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit in the Area Focus Project areas than in Edinburgh as a whole. This is particularly noticeable in Muirhouse where there has been a decline of 17%.
- Overall, these are very positive findings but care should be taken due to the relocation of some residents as part of Edinburgh's regeneration efforts. It is not possible to estimate what impact these may have had on these figures.

Figure 10: DWP Out-of-Work Benefit Claimants, February 2008 – November 2010

	February 2008	November 2010	Change	% Change
Scotland				
JSA	75,340	131,090	55,750	74.0
IB/ESA	295,530	277,840	-17,690	-6.0
Lone Parent	59,930	51,830	-8,100	-13.5
DWP Out of Work Benefits Total	447,040	478,000	30,960	6.9
Edinburgh				
JSA	5,470	10,020	4,550	83.2
IB/ESA	21,900	20,790	-1,110	-5.1
Lone Parent	4,680	4,020	-660	-14.1
DWP Out of Work Benefits Total	33,130	35,970	2,840	8.6
Muirhouse Datazones				
JSA	180	255	75	41.7
IB/ESA	510	425	-85	-16.7
Lone Parent	185	100	-85	-45.9
DWP Out of Work Benefits Total	910	810	-100	-11.0
Craigmillar Datazones				
JSA	110	210	100	90.9
IB/ESA	565	525	-40	-7.1
Lone Parent	180	140	-40	-22.2
DWP Out of Work Benefits Total	880	905	25	2.8

Source: NOMIS – DWP Benefits

Whilst difficult to attribute these changes solely to the Area Focus Projects, they do suggest that significant inroads have been made into worklessness in the two communities Area Renewal serves. An alternative way of looking at this issue is to see whether the gap with Edinburgh and Scotland is narrowing. Figure 11 shows:

- Baseline value – the proportion of working age residents claiming out-of-work benefits prior to the projects starting (February 2008).
- Current value – the proportion of working age residents claiming out-of-work benefits in the most recent available quarter (November 2010).
- Baseline gap and current gaps – how Muirhouse/Craigmillar compare to Edinburgh and Scotland in February 2008 and November 2010. A figure of 100 would mean that Muirhouse/Craigmillar had the same level of worklessness as Edinburgh/Scotland.
- An assessment of whether the gap closing – ↓ represent a closing gap, ↑ a widening gap and — no change.

The key points to note are that:

- The proportion of working age residents that are claiming out-of-work benefits is substantially higher in the Area Focus Project datazones than in Edinburgh or Scotland. For example, in Muirhouse, the level of benefit claimants was 310% of the Edinburgh level and 235% of the Scottish level in February 2008.

- Over time, the gap with Scotland and Edinburgh has closed. For example, the proportion of the working age population in Muirhouse claiming out-of-work benefits declined from 310% of the Edinburgh average in February 2008 to 264% in November 2010.
- There appears to have been more progress made in Muirhouse than in Craigmillar. As outlined earlier, this is likely to reflect the slightly later start date and the more deprived client group in this area.

Figure 11: DWP Out-of-Work Benefit Claimants, February 2008 – November 2010

	Area Focus Project		Area Focus Project versus Edinburgh			Area Focus Project versus Scotland		
	B'line Value	Current Value	B'line Gap (%)	Current Gap (%)	Is Gap Closing	B'line Gap (%)	Current Gap (%)	Is Gap Closing
Muirhouse	31.0	28.3	310	264	↓	235	202	↓
Craigmillar	36.2	36.9	362	345	↓	274	264	↓

4. VIEWS OF AREA FOCUS CLIENTS

Introduction

The aim of the Area Focus Projects is to engage with the hardest to reach clients and to provide a holistic service to address the multiple barriers that they face. A key test of how successful the projects have been in these aims is how clients judge their experience of the Area Focus Projects.

To capture clients' perspectives, a series of 12 focus groups were held with clients at the Area Focus Project's premises in Muirhouse and Craigmillar. Attendance at the focus groups varied between 2 and 7 clients. At the start of each focus group, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire which allows quantitative data to be presented alongside the qualitative feedback provided by clients during the focus group discussions and interviews. The analysis here is based on these 12 focus groups, supplemented by a number of *ad hoc* individual interviews with clients who dropped into the Area Focus Project offices while TERU staff were there. A total of 54 clients were captured through these focus groups and short interviews.

In addition, in-depth case study interviews were carried out with 20 individual clients. The full case studies are given in Appendix 1 and extracts are provided throughout this chapter to illustrate key points. These case studies are intended to illustrate a range of different client journeys – from initial engagement to current outcomes. The purpose of developing case studies is to illustrate how the process looks from the client perspective and they are not intended to represent 'good practice'. Different types of client (i.e. differentiated by gender, age, length of unemployment, barriers to employment) and types/levels of support have been included. 4 clients were involved in both a focus group and were selected as a case study. In total, 70 clients have been engaged in the research.

Characteristics of Area Focus Project Clients

To provide context for the discussion of the views of Area Focus Project clients, some statistics on who participated in the client consultation process are provided.

- 56% of participants were clients at Craigmillar, while 44% were at Muirhouse.
- 61% of participants were male and 39% female.
- Figure 12 shows the breakdown of clients attending the focus groups and interviews by age groups. Whilst there is a spread across all ages, the majority were 'prime age' (aged 25-50). Accounting for 70% of the research participants, this group is slightly overrepresented compared to clients as a whole (56% of whom are prime age).

Figure 12: Participating Clients by Age

	%
Under 18	5.9
18-24	13.4
25-40	40.3
41-50	29.9
51-64	10.4
65+	0.0
Total	100.0

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

Previous Engagement

A key aim of the Area Focus Projects approach is to successfully engage the 'hardest to reach' clients who do not already access services from other organisations. Of the clients who took part in the focus groups and interviews:

- When asked if they were getting any other help **to get into work** before coming to the Area Focus Project, just under half (49%) of participants said that they had been. When asked in focus groups/interviews about the help they were accessing, most people said the only help they had been getting was through attendance at Jobcentre Plus, which was compulsory in order to access their benefits. A small number said they had been accessing other employability services, such as Ingeus.
- When asked if they were getting any **other** sort of help before coming to the Area Focus Project, only 24% had been receiving support. When asked about the kinds of support they had been accessing in the focus groups/interviews, much of this appeared to be to support with health or mental health issues, e.g. counselling.

When those that were not accessing any other services before engaging with the Area Focus Projects were asked about the reasons this, common responses included not knowing what was on offer or where to find help, or negative experiences with other services in the past. In particular, there was a perception that many employment services, in particular Jobcentre Plus, were unfriendly or intimidating, or that they often tried to "push" clients into employment without taking account of their needs or interests. In addition, several clients also raised the issue of the distance that they needed to travel to access other services (with both Muirhouse and Craigmillar being on edge of the city).

Engagement with Area Focus Project

When asked how they initially found out about the Area Focus Project, clients were quite evenly split across three methods:

- 32% had been approached by Project staff at home. While many clients were happy to come along after hearing about what was on offer, some, particularly those with mental health issues, were more wary and required several return visits. The attitude of staff – described as staff 'very up front and down to earth' – is crucial in persuading people to come along. This method of engagement was more common among clients in Craigmillar than in Muirhouse.
- 31% of clients had seen the local office and gone in – either through curiosity to see what was on offer or enquire about the job vacancies or other opportunities advertised outside. This was much more common in Muirhouse, given its location in a busy local shopping centre, but several clients in Craigmillar mentioned having been attracted in by the noticeboard outside.
- 31% had heard about the services on offer from the Area Focus Project by word of mouth from friends or family. This 'snowball' effect reflects the overwhelmingly positive experiences that most clients have of the Projects – a number of clients mentioned in the focus groups and interviews that they have gone on to recommend it to people that they know.

Figure 13: Participating Clients by Method of Engagement (%)

	Muirhouse	Craigmillar	Total
Staff came to my house	10	51	32
Saw the local office and came in	50	15	31
Friend or family told me about them	30	31	31
Another organisation told me about them	7	0	3
Other	4	3	3

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

One potential point of concern is that very few of the clients said that they had been referred to the Area Focus Projects by other organisations. In fact several clients complained that other organisations that they had been getting help to find work had not told them about the Area Focus Project in their area – and appeared not to know about it. Only 2 clients (3% of total) had been referred by another organisation and both of these had been referred by NEDAC – a project located in the same shopping centre as the Muirhouse office.

Case Study: Engagement with Area Focus Project

Christine is a client at the Area Focus Project in Muirhouse. She first came to the Project when she was going through a bad patch in her life and “didn’t know what to do”. She was in a lot of debt, couldn’t afford to pay her bills and felt like “everything was going wrong”.

She lives close by so used to pass the office in the shopping centre quite regularly. One day she noticed the signs in the window describing all the different kinds of help on offer and decided to come in. Although she was nervous, the staff were very friendly and made her feel at ease. She was very stressed and felt that she had a lot of things going on in her life, but a member of staff sat her down, listened to her describe her situation and helped her “break it down into things that they could deal with”.

Attraction of Area Focus Project

Clients were asked how important a number of factors were in attracting them to come to the Area Focus Project, on a scale between ‘very important’ and ‘not at all important’. In Figure 14, the breakdown of scores is provided, alongside the average score – where a score of 5 is ‘very important’ and 1 is ‘not at all important’. The reasons for clients coming to the Area Focus Project can broadly be broken down into two sets of factors:

- The help that clients were looking for, and
- The characteristics of Area Focus Project approach that appealed to them.

Figure 14: Factors Attracting Individuals to Area Focus Projects

	% Saying					Av. score
	Very important		Not at all important			
	5	4	3	2	1	
What clients are looking for						
Wanted to get into work	70	6	12	1	10	4.27
Wanted to get into education or training	43	17	22	4	13	3.74
To get help I needed (e.g. dealing with debt)	20	13	10	15	42	2.55
To improve my health	20	10	12	13	45	2.47
Wanted to change something in local area	10	7	22	21	40	2.28
Area Focus Project Approach						
Staff were friendly and approachable	81	7	4	0	7	4.56
Staff listened to me and understood my needs	74	9	10	0	7	4.42
Could just drop in – no pressure	71	13	4	0	11	4.33
Could get lots of different help from one office	49	19	24	0	9	3.99

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

Regarding the things that clients wanted to achieve by coming to the Area Focus Projects:

- Looking to find employment was clearly the most important, rated as 'very important' by 70% of clients.
- Wanting to get into education and training was also a common motivation.
- Other reasons were less common – although still cited by a significant minority.

These findings were backed up by the key points to come out of the focus group discussions and case study interviews.

- Many individuals wanted to work and were looking for any help that they could get to find a job.
- Where people were looking for help in getting into education or training, this was often to help them find a specific type of work – for example training for an SIA badge to work in security.
- A significant number of clients came to the Area Focus Project for help in dealing with specific and often urgent problems – for example, help dealing with bills or payment demands, finding out about benefit entitlements or housing issues.

In relation to characteristics of the Area Focus Project that attracted people, all of the factors were rated as important by the majority of clients. In particular:

- Clients appreciated the welcoming and friendly atmosphere of the Project offices. Several mentioned that they had been nervous or apprehensive about coming in for the first time, but the staff “put them at ease straight away”.
- Staff were also seen as taking the time to find out what clients needed or wanted and helping with what was most important to them – this was seen as contrasting with the approach of other organisations who they felt often “had their own agenda”.
- It was important to clients that they could drop in whenever they liked, without needing to make an appointment and that they could access a wide range of help.

Case Study: Attraction of Area Focus Project

Colin first came to the Area Focus Project in Craigmillar briefly around 2 years ago. He urgently needed to sort out an electricity bill payment and had seen a leaflet about the Area Focus Project, so came in to use the phone. Although he had found the staff at the Project welcoming, he did not return immediately. He was suffering from severe depression and did not want to talk to anyone or leave the house.

Area Focus Project staff followed up on his visit with a number of phone calls and visits. While he initially “blanked” them, after about half a dozen phone calls he eventually decided to go back. He appreciated the persistence of the staff and thought it was nice that people showed some interest in his wellbeing – and he perceived this as genuine concern.

Views of Area Focus Project Services

Clients were asked how satisfied they had been with the different sorts of help available through Area Focus Project and with the Project as a whole. As Figure 15 shows:

- Every aspect of the Area Focus Project’s service was rated highly in terms of client satisfaction, scoring above 4.
- Overall the programme scored 4.88, with no clients saying they were dissatisfied with the service as a whole.
- Given the wide range of personal circumstances, a significant proportion of the clients spoken to had not participated in some of the services on offer – for example, fewer than half had taken part in activities that had been organised, such as gardening or walking groups.
- In contrast, the vast majority of clients had made use of the phone or computers and help finding a job. Given the broad based approach, with funding from NHS and Wider Role as well as Joined Up for Jobs, it may have been expected that many clients would not be interested in looking for work. This finding suggests that getting into employment is an important priority for most clients even if it is not the initial reason for engagement.

Figure 15: Views of the Area Focus Projects

	% Saying					Av. score	Not received (%)
	Very satisfied		Very dissatisfied				
	5	4	3	2	1		
Area Focus Project as a whole	87	13	0	0	0	4.88	0
Being able to drop in anytime	90	9	1	0	0	4.88	2
Being able to use phone/computers in office	87	9	3	1	0	4.81	3
Being approached by Project at home	79	15	4	2	0	4.71	25
Help with finding a job	72	20	8	0	0	4.64	9
Being able to get lots of different help from one office	72	17	11	0	0	4.61	3
My action plan	65	23	10	0	2	4.48	29
Help getting into education	58	33	7	0	2	4.44	35
Help getting into training	62	20	14	2	2	4.38	28
Getting me help from other organisations	65	9	18	7	2	4.28	19
Help getting into volunteering	56	21	19	5	0	4.28	38
Activities they have organised	55	16	16	6	6	4.06	56

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

As suggested by Figure 15, clients' views of the Area Focus Project as a whole were overwhelmingly positive. When prompted in the focus groups and interviews about what were the 'good things' about the Area Focus Project, clients suggested a range of things:

- Most commonly put forward as the best thing about the Area Focus Project was the staff.
 - Clients appreciated that staff “always make time for you, even when you can see they're busy” and “never turn you away”.
 - Clients with the most severe issues appreciated knowing that help was always available if they ever had any problems – or even if they wanted to “just come in for a chat”.
- Use of a phone and computers was seen as very important by many clients. Many clients simply could not afford the cost of long phone calls to employers, benefit agencies, etc., while few had access to computers or the internet at home. Alternatives, such as libraries, are not ideal because of time limits and the lack of help available.
- The range of help available was a key issue for many clients – in particular, the fact that they could access staff offering money advice, help with housing etc. – without having to go elsewhere. Many would find accessing support

elsewhere difficult and intimidating. However, not all clients appreciated that some of these services were provided by outside organisations.

- The location of the premises in their own communities, which meant they did not have to travel into the city centre, was also seen as a major benefit.

Case Study: Experience of Area Focus Project Services

Derek is 47 and is a client at the Area Focus Project in Craigmillar. He lives alone and has suffered from severe mental health problems. The Area Focus Project has given him practical help with things that he thinks he probably couldn't manage on his own. They make sure that he has enough food, check that he is getting his medication and help him to fill out forms that he needs to do to receive benefits etc. In particular, he has a very poor memory and often forgets about things like appointments or collecting prescriptions. Staff "know about every important thing in his life" and will call to remind him if there is something he needs to do. He feels it is comforting to know that there is always someone who can help him – he feels he can relax with the staff, and they are "like a family who care for him".

When asked about what has not been so good and need to be improved, many clients could not identify anything negative about the Area Focus Projects and were particularly keen to stress that they would not make any criticisms of the staff. However, when prompted, the following issues were raised:

- The most common suggestion for improvement was increased provision of phones and computers for people to use – because the offices were often busy, clients sometimes could not get to use these facilities or had to come back later.
- Some clients felt that because of the limited space, there was a lack of privacy when discussing personal issues with staff or making phone calls.
- A small number of clients, particularly at Craigmillar, felt that young people did not make proper use of the service, only coming in to "mess about" and "not showing the staff respect".
- Two clients with mental health issues complained about the turnover of staff – they felt that when the member of staff they had been dealing with left, this meant they had to "start all over again" to build up a relationship.

Impact of Area Focus Projects

Clients were asked about what sort of impact they thought coming to the Area Focus Project has had on their lives. As Figure 16 shows, the most commonly mentioned benefits were:

- Improved chances of getting a job (76%).
- Improved confidence (67%).
- Have a better idea of what I'd like to do in future (61%).

More generally two elements are positive:

- The proportions saying that the Project has helped them are high for most of the options proposed.
- Only one client felt that coming to the Project had not helped them in any way. No further details were given by this individual about why they felt it had not helped them.

Figure 16: Impact of Area Focus Projects on Individuals

	%
Improved my chances of getting a job	76
Improved my confidence	67
Have a better idea of what I'd like to do in future	61
Helped my get a job	43
Got me help from other organisations	40
Know more people in my local area	40
Helped me with problem I faced	37
Improved my health	31
Developed new interests	29
Helped get into training	29
Helped get into education	27
Helped get into volunteering	27
Too early to say	7
Has not helped in any way	1

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

In the group discussions and interviews, the reasons clients felt that the Area Focus Project had helped to improve their chances of finding employment were explored and included:

- Their improved awareness of job opportunities through the vacancies advertised in the window/noticeboard and the 'job book' as well as access to the internet to search for vacancies. In addition, many clients said that staff would call them if any vacancies came up that they might be interested in.
- Clients being able to develop a better idea of what they wanted to do through discussions with staff – and identifying the steps that they would need to take.
- Help with preparing CVs and filling in application forms. Several clients have dyslexia, so find this difficult, while many previously had little knowledge of what employers were looking for. Even where a client has recent experience of jobsearch, they felt that staff were able to show them some additional 'tricks' to improve their CVs. Also, clients often required the use of a computer for this and the Project provided access to this resource.
- Several clients had been given 'practice' interviews by Project staff – this is particularly helpful in letting them know what to expect and how to present themselves.
- A number of clients had been given help in applying for education and training – often using ILA funding, which few previously had knowledge of – which will help them to access employment.

Case Study: Employability Impacts

Example 1

Barry has been a client at the Area Focus Project in Muirhouse for around 2 years since moving to the area. Before coming to the Project, he was unemployed. He has found a succession of part-time jobs through the Project, and has just found a better paid, full-time job through them.

He puts his success down to the help given by staff in preparing CVs and application forms. He has also learned a lot through the interview preparation training – such as body language, eye contact etc. He believes that “these little things make all the difference”.

Example 2

Before he came to the Area Focus Project in Muirhouse, Ian was unemployed. Thanks to Community Renewal he is now in a plastering course at Edinburgh Telford College which he started last year. This came about after staff from the College came to visit the Area Focus Project office. Ian saw that there were places on a plastering course available and told the staff that this was something he would be interested in. He thought that he wouldn't be accepted because he was too old (he is 31), but the staff helped him to fill out the application forms and he got a place on the course.

Clients were asked if their experience of coming to the Area Focus Project had benefited them in any other ways – both employability-related and wider:

- A significant proportion of clients had never used computers before coming to the Project – they saw the help that they have had around this (both from staff and from courses that they have been referred to) as a major benefit.
- A number of clients – both those who are looking for work and those that think they are not yet ready for paid employment – have been helped to find volunteering opportunities.
- Many claim their confidence has been built up through the encouragement given to them by staff (one client described them as “always positive”), getting involved in volunteering or activities or simply having somewhere to come that will “get them out of the house”. As a result several felt that they were happier.
- Many clients – particularly those with issues such as addiction or mental health problems – have chaotic lifestyles. The Area Focus Project can be a “stabilising influence”. Several believed that having a welcoming place to come has helped to facilitate their recovery.
- Some clients have benefited from the help given by the Project to address crisis situations.

Case Study: Wider Impacts

Helen has been a client at the Area Focus Project in Muirhouse for around a year since moving to the area after a period of homelessness. The staff have helped her and her partner with a number of issues, including applying for benefits, accessing food parcels and furniture from charities and taking her to a medical check-up.

The biggest impact that it has on her life is that she is now receiving all the benefits that she is entitled to. Before coming to the Project she had no money and no income even to buy basic essentials and was receiving no income. She did not know where to go for help. She does not like the area, but feels that the Area Focus Project is a “safe place to come”.

Clients were also asked what sort of impact they thought the Area Focus Project has had on their local area. The main impact noted by focus group attendees/interviewees was that they felt people in the area knew where to go for help. In the discussions and interviews, the vast majority of clients felt that the

existence of the Project was very positive for their local area. While many acknowledged that their areas had a lot of problems, they stressed that “there are a lot of good people who want to work and are looking for help” that was not otherwise available in the area. Several people also mentioned the benefits in terms of generating community spirit by “bringing people together” and “helping you to meet your neighbours”.

Many clients in both areas expressed fears that the Area Focus Projects would be shut down, since they had seen “a lot of things come and go”. People felt that the Project “would be sorely missed”.

Figure 17: Impact of Area Focus Projects on Muirhouse/Craigmillar

	%
Everyone knows where to go for help	66
More things happening in area	49
More people doing things for area	47
More local people in work	43
Too early to say	10
Has not helped in any way	0

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

Clients' Current Activities

Finally, clients were asked about what they were currently doing in terms of employment, education, training and engagement with support services.

Several key points emerge from this:

- A third of clients are in work – either part- or full-time.
- 19% were in education or training and 19% were volunteering.
- The majority were still getting help from the Area Focus Project.

Figure 18: Current Activities

	%
In work	33
In education	10
In training	9
Volunteering	19
A member of any local groups	9
Continuing to get help from Area Focus Project	77
Getting help into work from other organisations	24
Getting any other help from other organisations	21

Source: TERU Area Focus Project Client Survey

Young People

As indicated in Chapter 3, Community Renewal's client monitoring data shows that the Area Focus Projects have been successful in engaging a substantial number of young people in accessing their services – 301 individuals aged 24 or under were engaged (or 35% of the total), including 156 (18%) aged 19 or under. This is significant, as this group tends to be more difficult to engage. Community Renewal staff identified a number of particular difficulties in engaging with this age group, including a lack of confidence, a distrust of authority or anyone seen as “official” and inconsistent attendance and timekeeping.

Of the Area Focus clients spoken to as part of the evaluation, 6% were aged under 18, while 13% were aged 18-24. This means that this age group was to an extent under-represented amongst those who participated in the evaluation, compared to the proportion in the client base. This reflects the particular difficulties in persuading this client group to speak to the researchers, attend at an agreed time, etc.

While the number of responses from young people does not allow a separate analysis of the survey results to be carried out, a number of points can be taken from the young people who participated in the focus groups and case study interviews:

- Most had heard about the Area Focus projects from friends or family, rather than being approached in their homes - although some did mention that they had met Community Renewal workers in the street before coming along to the project.
- The main motivation that young people had for coming to the Area Focus projects was for help to find work. Some younger clients had a clear idea of the sort of job that they wanted to do and came for help to get into education or training to pursue this goal.
- Few young people had been engaged with other services before coming to the Area Focus projects. Where they had been, it was usually in attending Jobcentre Plus to sign on.
- While clients of all age groups identified the welcoming and informal atmosphere of the Area Focus offices as being important, this seemed to be particularly attractive to younger clients who were intimidated by agencies who appeared more “official”. The “drop-in” nature of the service was also an important factor, given the difficulties that some younger clients have with meeting appointments.

Case Study: Young People

Liam is 17 years and is attending Community Renewal's Area Focus Project in Craigmillar. He left school around a year ago, soon after he turned 16. He did not enjoy school – he says he found it boring, “did not get on with the teachers” and would often not attend. He left with no qualifications. In the period after leaving school, he says he was doing “nothing”, just “mucking about” with his friends.

He first came into the Area Focus project around six months ago. He says he had been walking past with one of his friends and decided to come in “just for a look” after seeing the sign outside. He is continuing to attend Community Renewal. He is currently coming in “pretty much every day”, to talk to the staff and to get help in looking for jobs and training courses.

Pre-Get Ready for Work Course

One example of the work that the Area Focus Projects have done with young people is a pilot Pre-Get Ready for Work (PGRFW) programme for 18 young people aged

16-19. The 12-week course was designed to help young people who were not in employment, education or training to move towards positive destinations, and in particular to help them to access further provision (such as Get Ready for Work) that they were not previously ready for. This was developed in response to the situation where significant numbers of young people had been coming to the Area Focus Projects but were failing to engage with other services that they had been referred to.

Of the 18 participants, 11 completed the course. One important factor in the pilot's success in keeping young people engaged was the training allowance paid to participants. This was a clear incentive to participate in and complete the course, particularly where young people felt they were under pressure from their parents to find paid employment.

An internal evaluation of the pilot carried out by Community Renewal, along with discussions with Community Renewal staff, highlighted a number of further factors that were key to the success of the course:

- The existing relationships and trust that staff had built up with participants.
- In-depth holistic assessments carried out with participants to identify to identify their individual barriers and goals.
- The good understanding that staff had of participants' barriers and challenging behaviour, group regulation of behaviour, and a policy of non-exclusion, except in extreme circumstances.
- Provision that was led by participants' needs – giving them a role in designing the course helped to ensure buy-in.
- Short work tasters rather than longer work experience placements.
- A high level of involvement from other agencies to deliver quality sessions related to participants' barriers.
- Operating from a base in a local area where many participants lived.
- The provision of intensive aftercare support.

Case Study: Pre-Get Ready for Work Course

Chantelle is 19 and has been coming to the Area Focus project in Craigmillar since January this year. At the time she was she was unemployed and looking for work, and initially came in to see what sort of help was on offer. She was told about the Pre-Get Ready for Work programme that was being run, and decided to go on it. Her main reasons were that she wanted to "keep busy", and she thought that it would make it easier to get a job.

Having completed the course, she now thinks it is much more likely that she will be able to find work. In particular, she has found the help she has had around CVs and application forms and the assistance that staff have given her to prepare for interviews useful.

Lone Parents

One of the rationales for identifying Craigmillar and Muirhouse as potentially benefitting from the Area Focus approach was the relatively high proportion of lone parents in these areas. Again, although the numbers of lone parents participating in the evaluation were too small for a separate analysis, from speaking to the lone parents who did take part in the focus groups and case study interviews several points can be made:

- As would be expected, childcare was a major barrier to employment for many lone parents. They felt that the jobs that they could do were limited by the

number of hours they could do, whether working hours fit into the school day, etc.

- Some lone parents expressed an interest in or were working towards employment in childcare themselves. In these cases, they looked to the Area Focus staff for guidance with identifying and applying for appropriate training courses, registering as childminders, etc.
- Several lone parents mentioned the advantages of being able to take young children along to the Area Focus projects, where their children could play while they spoke to staff or used the computers to look for jobs. This was not something they were comfortable doing where agencies or organisations operated in more formal surroundings.
- Several, particularly those who had suffered from mental health problems, also mentioned the benefits of having somewhere to go “just to get out the house”, and the support offered by Area Focus staff as someone to talk to and share their problems with.

Case Study: Lone Parent

Nicola is a client at Community Renewal’s Area Focus project in Muirhouse. She is 29 years old and has a young daughter. She first found out about the project in 2009 from her sister-in-law, who had been coming to the office to get help to find work. She was helped to find a part-time job in a shop over Christmas. However, this was just temporary, and she is once again looking for work.

She thinks that her experience of help to find work through the Area Focus project has been much better than any that she has had with Jobcentre Plus. She claims that advisors at the Jobcentre “try to push you towards just any job”, and had told her to apply for a job that involved lifting and carrying while she was pregnant. In contrast, she says that Area Focus staff “sit you down and listen to you” and try to find things that you are interested in and would be suitable for you.

5. VIEWS OF AREA FOCUS PARTNERS

Introduction

As one of the objectives of the Area Focus Projects is to connect clients with a range of services which can support them to achieve their objectives, the final element of the primary fieldwork was to interview a range of service providers. The service providers were drawn from two sources:

- Area Focus Project staff identified the 20 organisations that they worked with most often.
- Capital City Partnership identified a small number of additional organisations (including the Neighbourhood Partnerships) operating in Muirhouse and Craigmillar.

In total, 17 service providers were interviewed, covering a wide range of specialities including employability, training and education, volunteering, money advice, housing, health, library services and anti-poverty measures. Details of the organisations interviewed are given in Appendix 2. The nature of the relationship varied – with some taking referrals from the Area Focus Projects, others delivering their services from the Project offices (e.g. running a surgery one day a week) and a few were involved in joint delivery (e.g. with some interviewees contributing to the Pre Get Ready for Work programme discussed in the previous chapter). Many also refer clients onto the Area Focus Projects – although many find that their clients are already aware of the Project. Most notably:

- The Council's Housing Department will alert individuals taking up tenancies in the relevant datazones about the project. Muirhouse Housing Association (interviewed as a funder) also makes its new tenants aware of the Projects.
- Other employability projects will refer onto the Area Focus Project if they feel that they can help their clients with issues that will help them sustain training/employment (e.g. money advice).

Key issues discussed included:

- The extent to which service providers have seen an increased flow of clients as a result of the work carried out by the Area Focus Projects.
- Whether service providers are seeing different sorts of clients coming through as a result of the Area Focus Projects.
- What lessons, if any, they have learnt about effective engagement with harder to reach clients and whether they have begun to change their engagement processes.

Getting Involved

To start, the service providers were asked whether they found it difficult to engage residents of Muirhouse and Craigmillar – and in particular those that are some distance from the labour market – in their services. Many did find it difficult to engage these clients. The main reasons for this were:

- Residents lack confidence to approach organisations that they do not have experience of using.
- Feelings of apathy and hopelessness which can reduce the individual's likelihood of using services as they cannot see the point of going to see someone.
- Issues individuals face are often complex and this can make engagement difficult – they need a degree of trust in the service before they will raise these sensitive issues.
- Suspicion about services – e.g. what is their agenda? Will seeing them affect their benefits? An example of this related to housing where officers found

that if an individual has rent arrears that they do not want to access the advice services that could help them as they are located in the same office.

- Many will engage – but do not want to formalise this. For example, City of Edinburgh Council have found this to be an issue for young people – they are happy to use services but don't want to 'sign up'.
- Service providers experience problems not just in terms of initial engagement but also in terms of getting individuals to continue to engage on an ongoing basis. In this sense, the Area Focus Projects can offer a good mechanism for re-engaging clients.

The service providers were then asked why they had chosen to engage with the Area Focus Projects. Reasons included:

- Recognising the value of partnership links with the Area Focus Projects where their close links to the community had the potential to improve approaches to particular issues. Examples here included efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour or engaging young people.
- Wanting to find out if it was a better way of reaching people who were reluctant to come into their office. For organisations that are not proactive and rely on referrals from agencies and projects to reach their clients, Area Focus Projects are clearly an important potential direct link to clients.
- Helping to increase their profile in these areas, and making more people aware of their service.
- Since Area Focus Projects come across people who are in crisis it is a good way for organisations to reach people who need help.
- One college mentioned that they felt that Area Focus Projects are able to do preparation with people so that they are better able to engage with the development officer and actually move onto a college course.

Where there had been a lack of involvement on the part of other service providers with Area Focus Projects, reasons included:

- Area Focus Projects not being involved at a strategic level, since "they have been getting on with doing things on the ground".
- Area Focus Projects asking for delivery in a way that would have been too onerous and would have affected the provider's own work.

Impact of Working With Area Focus Projects

Service providers were asked whether as result of working with Area Focus Projects they had seen any changes in the numbers or types of clients engaging with their service.

- Most of the projects mentioned that they had had referrals from the Area Focus Projects at some point and in that sense these represented additional clients using their services. A good example here is that Skills Development Scotland felt that through Area Focus Projects they have been able to reengage with some of the MCMC group that they had lost touch with. Additionally, one indication of increased engagement was that the number of support sessions provided by the Council's Housing Department through Area Focus Projects have had to be increased as there has been so much demand.
- It seemed that the Area Focus Projects also enhanced quality of engagement. For example North Edinburgh Childcare thought that while there is a good chance that clients may have heard about their courses anyway, the support from Area Focus Projects may have made the difference in terms of them taking the next step to apply and get onto the course.
- There was also a feeling amongst some providers that the types of client engaged through the Area Focus Projects were unlikely to have accessed

support otherwise. For example, housing support staff said they were 'astonished' to see tenants that they felt would never engage with any service engaging with Area Focus Projects and through them accessing housing and other services. Several other providers also reported that it had helped them to meet more disadvantaged clients than they would have done otherwise, although they have only anecdotal evidence.

There was also a feeling amongst many service providers that working with the Area Focus projects had helped them to improve the delivery of their services and the outcomes for clients.

- In terms of the quality of engagement with clients, organisations who had located staff in the premises of Area Focus Projects felt that this allowed them more face to face engagement, which was better quality as they were able to go over issues with clients in a more in depth way.
- Some providers were seeing clients that they had engaged through the Area Focus Projects beginning to come into their office as well – showing that they had been successful in breaking down some of the initial suspicion that clients had.
- Some services could give clients more effective help, as in the Area Focus Project offices clients are more relaxed and then tend to give more information (speak more freely or give 'the whole story'). This helps the support worker to deal with the situation more efficiently and more quickly. For example, one housing support worker felt that she is seeing clients "a bit earlier, before they have reached a crisis point" – this means that it can be easier to find a solution and therefore allows a better outcome for the client.
- North Edinburgh Childcare felt that working with the Area Focus Projects helps people to sustain training or complete their qualification and stay in work through the ongoing support that they receive.

Added Value of Working in Partnership Area Focus Projects

Service providers were asked about what they felt were the benefits of working with the Area Focus Projects. Common responses included:

- The people whom Area Focus Projects refer are more able to engage in the service – they are more confident; better able to ask for help; have a better understanding of what the service they have been referred to is going to do for them and are generally more positive and trusting about the agency that they have been referred to compared to clients who have not been referred through the Area Focus Projects.
- People tend to be more receptive to the advice and signposting offered – less cautious and more used to asking for help.
- With the exception of the college example given below, there are few inappropriate referrals from Area Focus Projects - and if there have been, these difficulties have generally been resolved through joint discussions. It is an efficient way for service providers to reach clients as they have been 'screened' first and then directed to the appropriate agency – this is particularly helpful to small agencies.
- As described above, organisations were positive about being able to use Area Focus Projects' premises to meet clients.
- Better mutual awareness between tenants and housing officers. As a result tenants seem to view housing officers with less suspicion and there is a better basis for building trust and dialogue. Some of this due to the trust that people have in Area Focus Projects – they see them as a good agency.
- The staff at Area Focus Projects are seen by other service providers as good partnership workers – they recognise that other agencies have expertise in

relation to particular issues and are happy to let them get on with these things and not try to duplicate services.

- Providers also saw Area Focus Projects as a resource that they can use in areas that they do not have expertise. For example, North Edinburgh Childcare found it helpful that they can call on support from Area Focus Projects to assist with issues such as benefit entitlement if trainees are having difficulties – this increases the likelihood of clients being able to sustain and complete their training.
- If they take referrals from Area Focus Projects, providers are confident that the clients will have back up support. They are also confident about referring clients to Area Focus Projects as they know that they will be well treated and assisted.
- Some providers felt that working with Area Focus Projects helped them to reach their own particular target client group more efficiently than conducting their own outreach in the general community which can be time consuming and costly.
- The development officer for one college felt that through working with Area Focus staff they had a better knowledge of the young people from the area and how to work with them – and were more able to handle issues that emerged.
- Organisations felt that the Area Focus approach was different to ways of working with local people that had been used in the past in a variety of ways. Some felt that previous approaches have not got to grips with the real issues that stop people engaging – which is distrust and lack of motivation due to persistent deprivation.
- Several other agencies spoke about how they see the Area Focus Projects offices as very open – a place that their staff can pop in to if they are in the area, and may be able to speak to people who are there. It is clear that some providers are beginning to work in a more informal and more opportunistic way than in the past – when they may have seen people only by appointment.

Some disadvantages or downsides mentioned by service providers who had worked with the Area Focus Projects included:

- Variations in the numbers coming forward each time organisations attended Area Focus Projects for example to run surgeries.
- One college felt that not all of the people referred by the Area Focus Projects have actually been ready for college, and several of them disengaged after putting in applications. There was a feeling that perhaps the projects wanted to include everybody not just the young people interested in college. This seems to suggest that they could be better at preparing people before they refer them and could have a better understanding of what is necessary to get into college. However the officer was not overly critical –and he feels that there is great potential to improve the approach, and that colleges have a role in providing information for Area Focus staff so that they are able to increase their understanding.

Lessons Learnt and Changes to Provision

Service providers reported learning a number of key lessons through working with Area Focus Projects. For example:

- Skills Development Scotland felt that the Area Focus approach demonstrated that partnership is a necessary element of any effective approach to community engagement.
- The projects demonstrate the need to 'get out there' and be proactive, as well as the benefits of being approachable and non-judgemental and meeting people on their own terms.

- City of Edinburgh Council see Area Focus Projects as having an “exemplar” approach when it comes to engaging local people and felt that they can learn from this.
- There was also a feeling that the Area Focus Projects demonstrate the need for a subtle approach with clients – the agenda about engagement and employability is there, but not pushed by the staff. Instead, ways of involving people in things that they see are valuable are explored (such as gardening which increases confidence and interest), and once that has been achieved they then can then begin to talk about work.
- An important view mentioned by a number of the interviewees was the need to get the ethos right when delivering services in areas of deprivation. Because of the effects of disadvantage outlined above, if services are not delivered in the right way there is a danger that services can end up making people feel, ‘*worse and more useless*’. Area Focus offices have a completely different ethos where the emphasis is on going at the person’s own pace and finding out what can be done to help them. However, creating the right atmosphere of trust takes skill and needs to be managed well

Organisations were asked if they had adopted any aspects of the Area Focus approach – or whether they were planning to do so in the future. While most interviewees said that they would like to improve their approach to engagement, this was still seen as being secondary to delivering the service that they were set up to deliver – so for example, Skills Development Scotland still see their role as working with young people on employability. Organisations see a key part of the Area Focus approach being that that they work with everybody – whereas most service providers need to work in a more targeted way with their key client group. Work to increase engagement in the community is seen as being too labour intensive and “scatter gun” – and it would be inefficient and inappropriate for all organisations to adopt the Area Focus approach. However, several organisations did report being influenced by aspects of this approach. For example:

- Hunters Hall Housing already has several arrangements to help them get closer to customers, such as being based locally, encouraging clients to come into the office, building rapport and trust with tenants and recognising that this takes time to develop. They also believe in the principle of getting people active and engaged in their community life first and then working on employability. This makes them employable without overtly working on ‘employability’ and also is more likely to lead to long term change because people will feel more confident and better about themselves.
- Libraries would like to do more joint work with Area Focus Projects. This kind of partnership working is becoming more important as they look more at how they can work on employability. The view is that libraries should become much more of a community resource and work in partnership to a much greater extent with local organisations that can support people.
- In addition, the ESF Library project for young people are trying to use the Area Focus methodology for engaging young people in a more informal way which is what they prefer rather than getting them to sign up formally for a service.

Interviewees mentioned a number of challenges that they would face to adopting such an approach, including:

- Resourcing. Most mentioned the effects of budget cuts, meaning that they would never have the manpower to do this kind of engagement, as well as the need for them to focus on their key services.
- Changing the culture – many organisations are used to being reactive, and would need a shift to being proactive.

- Staff might not be used to working out in the community.
- Staff might not be comfortable with informal approaches – since this represents a different way of working.

Providers were asked whether the Area Focus approach could be adopted more widely across Edinburgh by other organisations.

- Those that thought it should felt that it has potential value because many people are not ready to engage in the deprived communities in Edinburgh, but this does not mean that there should be no attempt to plant seeds in people's minds about the help that they could use in the future.
- Another point raised was that while the approach does fulfil a need, it should not be restricted to employability – and the projects should have broader based funding to allow them to do more work on longer term engagement and promoting lifelong learning necessary for really improving employability in the longer term.
- It was felt that such an approach is only really necessary in the most deprived areas with the most intractable problems.
- One issue raised was the need to keep the Area Focus approach very close to the local community – a small area approach is needed to make it work properly as it is premised on developing trust and word of mouth contacts. If aimed at a larger area this would be diminished and the approach would be unlikely to work as well.
- Another issue was it was felt that community-based projects such as Area Focus can take a long time to get established and to build up trust with local people – but once established, the projects are vital for deprived communities, and it would be a 'kick in teeth' for local residents if they were then taken away.

Finally, service providers were asked whether there was any way that they thought arrangements could be improved.

- Some providers were not fully aware of the way that the Area Focus Projects help people and the range of support that they provide – and it would be good to raise awareness that projects and services could refer clients to the Area Focus Projects.
- In particular, one provider felt that staff in the health service do not always know about the Area Focus Projects and that more could be done to market the project to health staff.
- One organisation thought that more should be done to develop a strategic approach and joint work.
- All interviewees reiterated that they have a good basis for going forward as they have formed good relationships with the Area Focus Projects and feel comfortable with their approach to clients and engagement.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS FOR MAINSTREAMING

Introduction

To recap, a number of objectives were set for this evaluation, namely to:

- *“Test the added value of the Area Focus projects in terms of increasing the number of workless people accessing support and services that they wouldn’t have otherwise. These do not necessarily have to be employment-focused given the remit of Community Renewal. There are wider objectives, for example related to tenants of local housing associations.*
- *Draw conclusions based on the work done by Community Renewal about the best way to work with those who are not engaging with access to work services and how this might be integrated into a city-wide approach.*
- *Evaluate the extent and effectiveness of the projects’ partnership working in each area.*
- *Suggest a methodology for integrating the area focus approach into Edinburgh’s proposed Strategic Skills Pipeline.”*

In this section, the key conclusions from the research in relation to the first three of these will be set out, followed by a discussion of the main options in relation to integrating the area focus approach into Edinburgh’s proposed Strategic Skills Pipeline.

Added Value of Area Focus Projects

The added value of the Area Focus Projects is three-fold:

- Only 49% of clients were accessing employability services before engaging with the Area Focus Projects and only 25% were engaging with other services. The Area Focus Project has therefore enabled Joined Up for Jobs – and other services – to extend their reach, engaging with clients that they would not otherwise have engaged.
- Interviews with service providers have demonstrated that not only are more clients being reached but the quality of the engagement has been dramatically improved. For example, clients are more trusting of services, are more open to discuss their problems, accept support, etc.
- 291 clients have entered employment, 149 have entered education or training, 77 are engaged in community activities and 70 are volunteering. Given that many of these clients were not previously engaged in employability or other support services, many of these outcomes would not have occurred had it not been for the Area Focus Projects. This has fed through into a narrowing of the gap with Edinburgh on worklessness rates.

How Employability Services Can Engage Clients More Effectively

The second objective is to consider the lessons that can be learnt about the best way to engage those that are not engaging with access to work services. Looking across the evaluation evidence, the key lessons appear to be:

- The reasons for engaging with the Area Focus Projects were varied – but both what was on offer and the approach taken by the Area Focus Projects was important.
- In terms of what was on offer, it was critical that a range of different supports – e.g. help moving into employment, help getting into education, addressing health issues, addressing community concerns – were available and that the support was tailored to the needs of each individual.
- In terms of the approach taken, individuals were attracted by the friendly and approachable staff, who had taken time to get to know them and their needs. Many valued the fact that the project had approached them. Another

important factor was that they were able to just ‘drop-in’ to test the waters – no appointment was necessary and they didn’t need to make a commitment to a particular programme of activities.

- When asked about the ‘best things’ about the Area Focus Projects, clients again mentioned the attitudes of staff, the open-access to phones, computers and one-to-one support and the range of supports available.
- Service providers acknowledged that they had learnt a number of lessons from working with the Area Focus Projects. In the main, these were around **how** to deliver services to deprived communities (e.g. the value of having premises within the community, taking time to build trust with client, being more proactive in engaging clients, etc.). This had led to some changes in the ways in which these organisations were delivering but most felt constrained from implementing wider changes. There are two issues here:
 - Resource constraints – which are particularly severe as a result of public sector spending cuts.
 - The need to focus their efforts on delivering their ‘core services’. Many saw the value of the Area Focus approach but considered the main value in having an organisation based in the community with the scope to engage in this broad-based way – and then for this organisation to connect residents with the services and supports that are appropriate to their needs.

Extent and Effectiveness of Project Partnership Working

The third element to be considered is the extent and effectiveness of partnership working by the Area Focus projects.

- Firstly, it should be noted that the Area Focus Projects have developed partnerships with a broad range of other public and third sector providers across Edinburgh. When initially asked to provide a list of the key organisations they work with, the Area Focus Projects provided a list of over 50 organisations to the research team.
- In terms of identifying and prioritising the key partners with whom to work, the Projects’ approach is pragmatic – they seek those services and supports that the clients have identified they require. This explains both the large number and breadth of partners they have engaged and the particularly strong connections they have sought to develop with some partners (e.g. housing, money advice, etc.) as these reflect the key issues faced by clients.
- Project staff outlined their approach to getting and keeping partners on board as being about helping them achieve their objectives and targets. In some cases, being funded by the same organisations has helped develop partnership working.
- Most service providers considered the Area Focus Projects to be good partners. There are several elements to this:
 - The attitudes they brought to partnership working were ‘good practice’ – e.g. they are not precious about clients and outcomes, they have a good understanding of what each partner can bring, they recognise the expertise of others and don’t try to duplicate services, etc.
 - They were welcoming to other project staff and encouraged them to use their premises.
 - Service providers felt that the Area Focus Projects were adaptable – focused on making best use of partners’ resources rather than having a fixed idea of what they should deliver.
 - The Area Focus Project bring additional resources to the area. For example, Area Focus Project staff are willing to contribute to joint efforts.

- A small number of service provider interviewees had had limited contact with the Area Focus Projects, suggesting that whilst partnership working is generally working well, some further improvements could be made.

Integrating Area Focus Approach into Strategic Skills Pipeline

The Brief set out explicitly a key underlying purpose of the evaluation in terms of helping the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group mainstream an engagement, assessment and case management approach through the proposed Strategic Skills Pipeline. Before discussing the options for mainstreaming the Area Focus approach into the Strategic Skills Pipeline, it is worth considering in general terms some of the thinking behind Strategic Skills Pipelines.

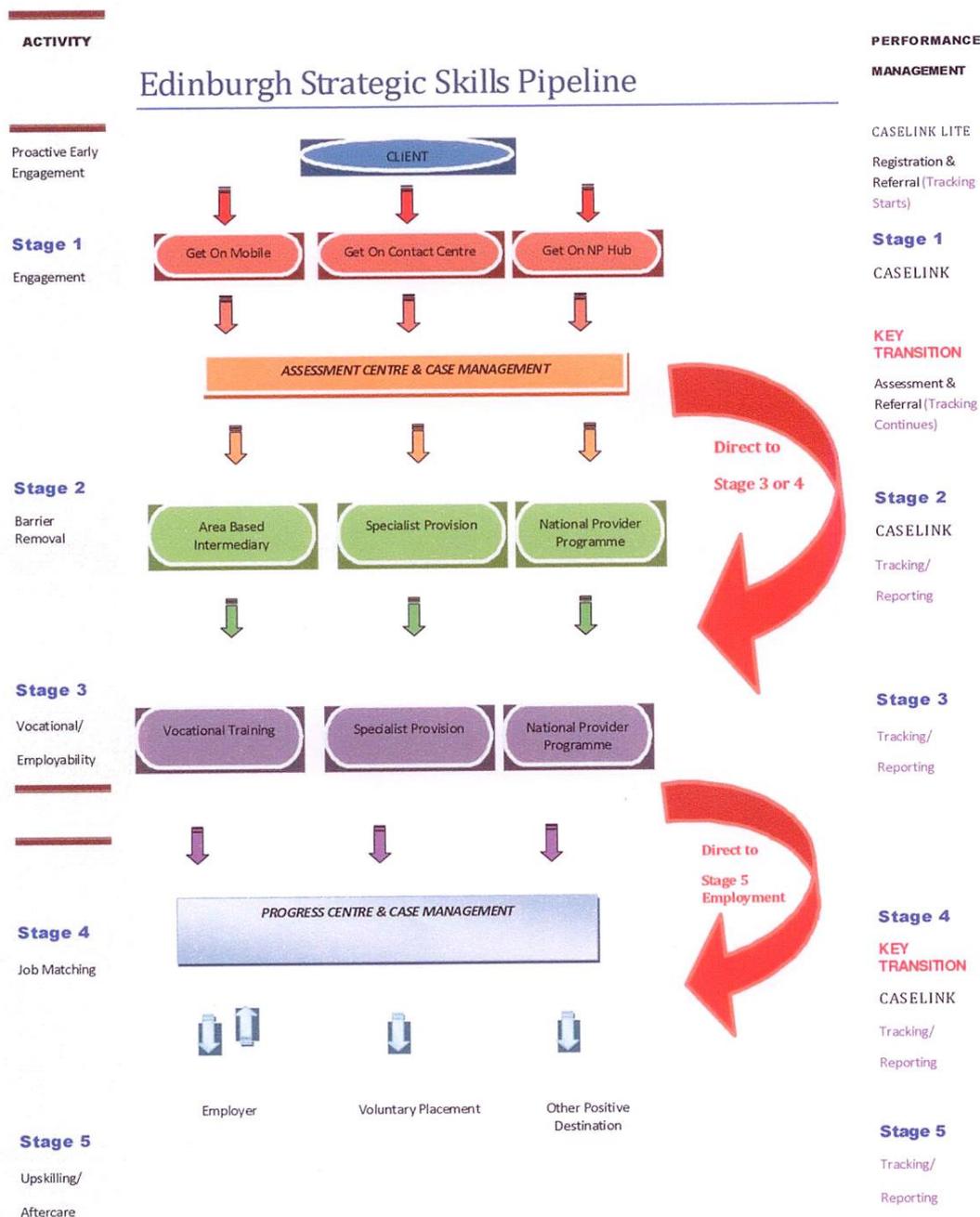
Strategic Skills Pipelines

Employability partnerships are increasingly focused on achieving outcomes and the design and delivery of appropriate interventions to achieve these. Employability strategies and action/business plans are key tools in agreeing and delivering the outcomes and interventions required. It is important to have clarity around who does what and how resources of their partner organisations are going to be aligned. A Strategic Skills Pipeline can be used to set out a clearer specification about what is going to be delivered and how. The Edinburgh Strategic Skills Pipeline (shown in Figure 19 below) illustrates this approach clearly.

- Pipelines show the journey that workless individuals will need to make in order to move into and sustain employment, accessing different types of services as they go. Not all clients will need to access all services in the pipeline – with the more disadvantaged likely to need to access more of the pipeline services than those closer to the labour market.
- Pipelines provide a framework against which individual partners can place their resources alongside those of others. This helps ensure that there is a pathway in place which is fully joined up in terms of service delivery from the client perspective.
- The performance management column of the diagram identifies underlying key processes which need to be delivered effectively if clients are to access the appropriate services at the right time, as well as to ensure that contact is maintained between services.

It is clear that the work of the Area Focus approach is relevant to a number of parts of the pipeline, in particular, in relation to proactive early engagement, but also in terms of the lessons learned about linking clients to appropriate services at the right time, as well as maintaining a long running trust relationship with the clients to facilitate client journeys.

Figure 19: Edinburgh Strategic Skills Pipeline



Options for Mainstreaming

There are four potential options for mainstreaming the Area Focus approach into the Edinburgh Strategic Skills Pipeline:

- **Option 1:** Contract with a specialist Community Renewal type provider to deliver engagement, assessment and case management in those communities with high levels of worklessness.
- **Option 2:** Commission end-to-end delivery and require the successful contractors to adopt key elements of the Area Focus approach within particular communities across Edinburgh.
- **Option 3:** Secure agreement of mainstream providers (e.g. Council Housing Department, housing associations) to take on the Area Focus approach and

use these organisations to connect clients that are furthest from the labour market into the Strategic Skills Pipeline. Funding will be required for these organisations to take on this additional role.

- **Option 4:** Develop a hybrid model – combining elements of Options 2 and 3. Under this option, the Area Focus approach would be adopted as part of end-to-end delivery, co-locating these services with mainstream providers and encouraging referrals and joint working between mainstream and employability services.

A summary of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these approaches are outlined in Figure 20 below.

Key Considerations

Critical to choosing between these options is understanding how employability services in Edinburgh will be structured going forward. At a national level:

- Two prime contractors (Ingeus Deloitte and Working Links) will deliver the **Work Programme** across Scotland on behalf of DWP. The Work Programme will support those that have been unemployed for 12 months or more (9 months or more for under 25s). Jobseekers Allowance claimants who have recently transferred from Incapacity Benefit will be required to participate after 3 months, as will some other priority groups. Employment and Support Allowance claimants may access the Work Programme at any time. The Work Programme is a ‘black box’ approach, with payments linked to movement into work and sustaining employment over the medium term (up to 2 years). Groups considered further from the labour market will attract higher outcomes payments.
- Jobcentre Plus will focus on supporting those that have been unemployed for less 12 months (9 months for the under 25s) back into work, using a range of supports under the banner of **Get Britain Working**. Jobcentre Districts will be larger than in the past but District Managers will have more flexibility.
- More generally, public sector spending cuts mean that resources for tackling worklessness are under pressure.

In light of this changing national approach, the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group has decided to focus its resources and efforts as a partnership on four groups (or ‘investment themes’):

- Support for 16-19 year olds
- Support for those less than 12 months unemployed
- Support for low earners
- Support to help people stay in work.

Underpinning the selection of the four groups are two principles:

- Given limited resources, the Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group feel it is important not to duplicate the efforts of the Work Programme and have decided to focus their efforts on those groups outside the Work Programme’s remit.
- The importance of early intervention – including supporting young people to make successful transitions into the labour market, helping individuals to retain employment and getting those that have become unemployed back into work as soon as possible. By intervening at an early stage, the hope is that they can prevent problems from becoming entrenched.

Whilst these are the priority groups, Joined Up for Jobs will continue to support other clients through the Strategic Skills Pipeline.

Figure 20: Options for Mainstreaming Area Focus Approach into Strategic Skills Pipeline

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1: Contract with specialist Community Renewal type provider to deliver Area Focus approach in high worklessness communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity of service • Critical success factors would be maintained – local base, open-access and open-ended support, range of services available and staff with right attitudes and experience in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are resources available in current climate to sustain stand-alone provision? • Strategic Skills Pipeline intended to pull together services – would funding separate services in small area undermine the broader approach?
Option 2: Commission end-to-end delivery and require the successful contractors to adopt key elements of the Area Focus approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable lessons to be rolled out to all employability provision across city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Area Focus approach is resource intensive – would the approach work if didn't have resources to spend time working with individuals? • Being small-scale and very local helps clients feel comfortable – may not be able to replicate at a larger level • Current Area Focus approach is genuine drop-in service – can only do by being 'more than employability'
Option 3: Secure agreement of mainstream providers (e.g. housing associations) to take on the Community Renewal approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already have connection to large proportion of residents (e.g. as tenants) • Will have local bases/delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Area Focus approach is broad-based so clients will approach regardless of initial problem – move to (for example) 'housing' would mean losing this
Option 4: Area Focus Approach would be adopted as part of end-to-end delivery, co-locating these services with mainstream providers and encouraging referrals between mainstream and employability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable lessons to be embedded into employability provision across city • Mainstream providers have connection to large proportion of residents (e.g. as tenants) and local bases/delivery • Potential to develop common engagement, assessment and case management for other strategies (e.g. Anticipatory Care, Housing Support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of appropriate sites for co-location • Ensuring key elements of approach are maintained

The choice of priority groups has mixed implications for the integration of the Area Focus approach into the Strategic Skills Pipeline:

- Outreach will be less important – as all of those unemployed for less than 12 months will be engaged with Jobcentre Plus and support to help people stay in work is likely to be most effectively delivered through employers (e.g. PACE, vocational rehabilitation services, etc.) rather than at the community level.
- However, there may be a need for more outreach to young people as this group can be particularly hard for mainstream agencies to engage. As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, the Area Focus approach has been successful in engaging young people in Muirhouse and Craigmillar.
- Whilst the groups selected are likely to have less severe barriers than those prioritised under previous programmes, they are still likely to require the broad-based, holistic supports that the Area Focus approach has effectively delivered in Muirhouse and Craigmillar. In addition, the focus on developing long-term relationships that they have adopted is likely to be critical in helping individuals retain and progress in employment.

Contracts for the delivery of the Strategic Skills Pipeline will be put out to tender by City of Edinburgh Council in due course. Whilst the contract specifications are still being agreed, the following elements seem likely:

- Contracts will be for end-to-end delivery of the Strategic Skills Pipeline. This will simplify and streamline delivery across the city.
- One contract will be for the delivery of the Strategic Skills Pipeline across the city on a geographic basis (i.e. with the city split into 4 or 5 areas). As each area will be large, contractors will be expected to take a ‘hub and satellite’ approach to delivery (for example, with satellites in local offices of housing associations, etc.). The use of satellite offices is critical as individuals may not access services in other neighbourhoods if they are difficult to access (e.g. because no public transport links) or as a result of territorial issues. This is a key lesson that has been learnt from the Area Focus approach.
- A ‘black box’ approach will be taken – with Joined Up for Jobs setting out what they want contractors to achieve but not specifying the services they must deliver to achieve these outcomes. This flexibility makes it difficult to ensure that the lessons from the Area Focus approach will be adopted, so mechanisms will need to be in place to ensure the lessons are learnt.

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Given the considerations outlined above:

- The plan to let contracts for end-to-end delivery of the Strategic Skills Pipeline means that **Option 1** is not feasible at this time.
- **Option 3** would require significant change within mainstream agencies in terms of how they deliver services. As we saw in Chapter 5, organisations see the value of the Area Focus approach but do not yet feel able to adopt it themselves. Mainstreaming the approach has always been Community Renewal’s long term goal – but the evidence from this evaluation would suggest that this is still some way off in Edinburgh.
- **Option 2** would ensure that the Area Focus approach becomes a core part of the Strategic Skills Pipeline ‘offer’ and provides an opportunity for the lessons from the approach (e.g. importance of values of staff, open door approach, etc.) are rolled out across employability provision.
- **Option 4** would also help ensure the Area Focus approach is at the centre of the Strategic Skills Pipeline. However, in this approach, Strategic Skills Pipeline services would be co-located with other mainstream services within the community, with a focus on encouraging joint working and learning from

each other. The advantage of this approach is that, if managed correctly, it should help kick-start the process of mainstreaming the approach – not just across employability but other mainstream services. In addition, this option would allow the development of joint assessment across different specialisms (e.g. housing, health, employability).

Our suggestion is that Joined Up for Jobs Strategy Group pursues **Option 4**.

Effective Mainstreaming of Area Focus Approach into End-to-End Provision

The following issues will need to be addressed if Option 4 is to be implemented effectively.

- Ensuring that potential contractors and mainstream agencies have **clarity** about the key aspects of the Area Focus approach and the added value it brings. As outlined above, the ‘black box’ approach will make it difficult for Joined Up for Jobs to specify that the approach is adopted, so it will be important that its merits are promoted and recognised amongst contractors.
- If Joined Up for Jobs wishes to go beyond this and require contractors to adopt the Area Focus approach, contractors should be required to outline how they will embed the approach into their delivery as part of the **tendering** process. In this case, their responses would be scored as part of the selection criteria. It is important that contractors move beyond platitudes to concrete examples of how they have implemented similar approaches in the past and/or the actions they will take to ensure the approach is embedded in their delivery (for example, that they have negotiated an agreement with a local housing association or credit union to deliver their service from their premises in an attempt to reach clients).
- Once contractors have been selected and mainstream agencies ‘signed up’, Joined Up for Jobs will need to partner with these organisations to ensure that the **lessons** about what has been successful are fully understood. In particular, elements such as the values and attitudes of staff, the focus on understanding the needs of individuals and pulling together a package of support that meets these, the ‘open door, no pressure’ approach, and the ability to access lots of different supports from a single office are all critical and there would be value in Pipeline contractors and mainstream agencies adopting these. These are simple things but have often been lost when the approach has been rolled out. Community Renewal’s previous experience suggests that demonstrating the approach (e.g. through work shadowing or joint working) is more effective than training.
- Once the contract has been awarded, delivery against the commitments made in relation to the Area Focus approach must be **monitored**. This could be done in two complementary ways.
 - Firstly, by adopting a small number of key performance indicators to be included in the contractor’s quarterly reports. For example, in terms of number of young people engaged in service.
 - Secondly, regular reviews of progress bringing together Joined Up for Jobs key partners, contractors and other stakeholders. The focus of these reviews should be on understanding the factors that are underpinning (or inhibiting) success and how these can be rolled-out or addressed. As part of this ongoing review process, consideration should be given to how the lessons on ‘what works’ can be adopted and embedded by mainstream agencies.

APPENDIX 1: CLIENT CASE STUDIES

Case Study: Alan

Background

Alan is 60 years old and a client at Community Renewal in Craigmillar. He has lived locally for around 5 years.

Before he came to Community Renewal he was out of work, but not really looking for a job. He says he has not worked for “a very long time”. He has previously worked in coal mining and in the building trade, but feels that due to his age he would not be physically able to do that type of work any more.

He has been volunteering at Greendykes allotments for around 3 years. This came about when a friend of his told him that there were allotments available and he put his name down for one. The management then asked him if he could help out. He normally goes there one or two days a week.

For the last few months he has been caring for his wife who has had an operation. He also has a son with learning difficulties who he has had to look after.

Experience of Community Renewal

Alan first found out about Community Renewal when staff knocked on his door about a year ago. He “didn’t have a clue at first”, but after hearing them explain what the project was and what they had to offer he decided to come along to Community Renewal to see what sort of help they could give him. Although he was interested in help to get a job, he really just wanted to find out what was on offer. He had only been visited at home once before deciding to come to Community Renewal.

On his first visit he was offered a cup of tea and a member of staff sat down with him to talk about what he was interested in and whether he needed anything. One of the first things they did was organise a charity to deliver some things that he needed, like a bed and pots and pans. Together they did an action plan which looked at what he would like to do and the things he would have to change to do it.

A lot of the help he has had from Community Renewal has been to help him find a job – this has involved things like helping him to create a CV and phoning him when job vacancies come up. For example, he found out about a job vacancy for a concierge in a block of flats in the local area through the staff at Community Renewal, who recommended it to him as something he might be interested in. With help from the staff, he completed an application form for the job and secured an interview. Prior to attending the interview, staff did a practice interview with him which he thought was really useful as it “meant you knew what to expect”. Although he didn’t get the job, he thinks having done it once means he will have a much better chance the next time something comes up.

Staff also showed him how to use the computers – which is something he had never done before. They sent him to the Adult Learning Centre for a class to find out about computers, and also put him down for a computer course at Telford College, but he only went for a couple of weeks because he had to look after his wife.

Impacts

He thinks the biggest impact that Community Renewal has had on him is that he is now much more likely to find a job. This is because he is coming “somewhere you find jobs advertised” and because of the help that the staff can give him in filling out application forms. Before coming to Community Renewal he felt that he probably

wouldn't get a job – because of his age, and the fact that he hadn't worked for a long time, he thought he had “no chance”.

Another big impact is that he now has some experience of using computers, which means he can come and look for jobs himself since “they are all advertised on the computers” – although he still needs help with e-mailing etc.

He thinks that if he hadn't found out about Community Renewal, he “wouldn't really be looking for a job”. He wouldn't bother going to the Jobcentre because he “never had this sort of help from them”.

Alan thinks that Community Renewal is “the best thing that has ever happened” for the area. He thinks it is particularly good for young people in the area, because a lot of them don't have jobs and have “a lot of problems” and there is now somewhere that everyone can go for help – and the staff “will never turn you away”.

He has also recommended Community Renewal to a friend that had lost his job. His friend has since been coming to get help from CR staff in looking for a job, and to use the computers to search and apply for vacancies. He has also had help to work towards an SIA badge.

Next Steps

Because of his personal circumstances, he has not been coming to Community Renewal recently as often as he used to. However, he hopes that by the end of May he will be able to start coming more regularly again.

He feels that he still needs more help to build up his CV to make him more attractive to potential employers.

He “really fancies his chances” of finding a job – ideally he would like one that involved gardening, but he will consider anything.

Case Study: Helen

Background

Helen is 39 and is a client of Community Renewal in Muirhouse. She lives with her partner and has 3 children, although they do not live with her as they are currently in care.

She has lived in the area for about a year. She is originally from Falkirk, but was made homeless along with her partner and were living on the streets for about 6 months. They had to move to Muirhouse as it was the only place that a house was available for them. She does not like the area – she feels it is not safe and “can’t go out at night – even to the shop round the corner”.

Helen is disabled and has a number of health problems as well as suffering from mental health issues and self-harming.

Experience of Community Renewal

She first heard about Community Renewal from someone in the street not long after moving to the area. She had just been placed in an empty flat with her partner and they had no money. Their first priority was that they needed to find out how to get the benefits that they thought they should be entitled to.

She was apprehensive about coming into Community Renewal for the first time because she had “never been in this situation before”, but they felt they had no choice because they “didn’t know where else to go”.

When they first came into the office she liked how the staff welcomed her and offered her a cup of tea – she thought it was “totally relaxed”. A member of staff sat them down and listened as they explained their situation, and helped them to “come up with a plan” by breaking down all the different things that they needed to deal with.

The staff at Community Renewal have helped her and her partner in a range of ways since they first came in. Their first priority was to sort out their benefits, so the staff spoke to the benefits office for them and helped Helen to fill out the forms that she needed to apply for ESA. They also pointed them to a charity where they could get some furniture for their home and a church in the area which ran a food bank, because they had not money to buy food. In addition, Helen has serious health problems after living on the streets, and a member of staff arranged a medical check-up for her and accompanied her to the hospital.

Impact

The biggest impact of Community Renewal on her life is that she is now receiving all the benefits that she is entitled to. Before coming to Community Renewal she had no money even to buy basic essentials like food and was receiving no income. She did not know where to go for help. Community Renewal is also the only place she can come to use the phone if she has any problems with her benefits.

The only previous help that Helen had was from Street Work, a group who work with homeless women, but she says “nobody has helped as much as the people in here”.

Because she and her partner do not come from the area they do not know many people, and feel that they are “outsiders”. She feels it makes a big difference to her knowing that there is somewhere she can always come to speak to someone “if she

is feeling down". She does not feel safe in the area, but feels that the office is a "safe place to come". She often comes in every day.

Next Steps

She is not looking for work at the moment and does not think it is likely that she will in the foreseeable future because of her bad health – she is still claiming ESA. Her partner is looking for work and Community Renewal have helped him to find a few vacancies and to think about what he might like to do. He thinks he might be able to do security work, and the staff have also helped him to complete some of his paperwork to apply for an ILA to help him get training.

Helen and her partner are now separated, but are still living together, so the next issue that she is seeking help with is finding accommodation. Community Renewal have been helping her to look for private lets (although the deposit that she would need is a major barrier for her) or possibly supported accommodation. Someone from Edinburgh City Council housing department also comes into the office every week, and she has been talking to them about trying to find a new house.

She would also like to look into regaining access to her children, and hopes that this is something that Community Renewal will be able to help her with.

Case Study: Brian

Background

Brian is 32 and was a client at Community Renewal's Muirhouse project. He has 3 children.

He is an ex-heroin addict and also has a criminal record for drug dealing. At the time he first came to Community Renewal he was studying at Telford College and was on a methadone programme to get off drugs.

Experience of Community Renewal

He first came to Community Renewal shortly after it first opened in the area in 2008. He lived locally and would pass the building every day, so noticed that the project had opened and was curious about what was on offer. He appreciated the "open door" approach that they took, the atmosphere in the office and the attitudes of the staff, which he described as "open and non-judgemental"

He got a lot of help from the staff in preparing his CV, writing covering letters and filling in forms – because he has dyslexia, it was really useful for him to be able to get assistance with this writing. It was also especially good to have access to the internet and the phone.

He decided to set up his own social enterprise to help young people from the same background as him, and because he thought that a lot of jobs would not be open to him because of his criminal record. The staff in Community Renewal gave him a lot of encouragement and advice, as well as helping him to understand the sort of thing that would be involved in setting up a social enterprise. They also gave him practical help in things like identifying potential funders and helping him to apply.

Impact

Although he was at college, coming off drugs and had a good idea of what he wanted to do when he first came to Community Renewal, he does think it helped him to understand how to progress and gave him support that helped him to successfully launch his social enterprise.

He feels that coming to Community Renewal helped him to understand better how to present himself to the "wider world". He thinks that a lot of people who live in the area "would never leave the scheme", so it is important that they are given help in how to relate to other people.

He feels that Community Renewal is a "vital part of Muirhouse" and is really important in trying to reduce social exclusion. He also thinks that is important that local people work in the Community Renewal offices – as well as giving them the chance to gain work experience, he feels that local people will have a good understanding of the sorts of issues that people living in the area face.

Next Steps

As Brian has moved away from the area and now runs his own social enterprise he is not in need of the kind of support that is on offer from Community Renewal. However, he remains friends with people in the area and often comes in to the Community Renewal office just for a chat.

He has also been working with Community Renewal in Craigmillar to deliver training courses and activities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Case Study: Colin

Background

Colin is 55 and is a client at Community Renewal's project in Craigmillar. He has lived in the area for around 10 years.

He has worked in the past as a laboratory technician, but has not been in work for several years and as a result thinks his qualifications are outdated. He suffers from mental health problems, and before coming to Community Renewal was getting help from a support worker at Link In in Craigmillar.

Experience of Community Renewal

Colin first came to Community Renewal's premises briefly around 2 years ago. He urgently needed to sort out an electricity bill payment and had seen a leaflet about Community Renewal and the help that was on offer, so decided to come in to use the phone.

Although he had found the staff at Community Renewal welcoming and they had helped him to sort out his problem, he did not return to Community Renewal immediately. At the time he was suffering from quite severe depression and did not want to talk to anyone or leave the house.

Community Renewal staff followed up on his visit shortly afterwards with a number of phone calls and visits to his home. While he initially "blanked" them, after about half a dozen phone calls he eventually decided to go back. He appreciated the persistence of the Community Renewal staff and thought it was nice that people showed some interest in his wellbeing – and he perceived this as genuine concern. He felt that if they were making the effort to find out how he was and to help him, then "the least he could do" would be to listen to them.

When he did return to the Community Renewal offices, he felt that the staff were "polite and professional – but welcoming", and immediately "got a good vibe" from them. This encouraged him to keep coming back.

He felt that staff "saw how he was as a person", rather than just as a set of problems to be addressed, and talked to him to find out his interests. Together they drew up an action plan which looked at what he might like to do. This has allowed them to recommend things that he might be interested in – for example, he has done a cookery course at Stevenson College that he found out about and applied for through Community Renewal.

He has had a range of support from the staff at Community Renewal, such as help using the computers to develop his CV or look at college courses, getting involved in gardening or simply having somebody to speak to. In addition, his support worker has been along to see what he is doing and talk to the staff about any help that he might need.

Impact

The main impact that Community Renewal has had on his life has been to facilitate his recovery from the mental health problems that he has faced. He describes his lifestyle previous to coming to Community Renewal as "quite chaotic and fragile", and believes that it has acted as a steadying influence. This is because it gave him somewhere to come, because the action plan that he has agreed with the staff has given him some aims to pursue, and because they "offer more than support" –

someone friendly and understanding to talk to. Because the staff know him, they know how to keep him motivated, and give him encouragement to do things when he might be “stalling”.

Since he engaged with Community Renewal, he feels that he is “going out more, is more engaged with the community and it less isolated”. Because he knows that it is somewhere that he feels calm and safe, he finds it helpful to “pop in” to Community Renewal first before he goes anywhere else.

He also feels that coming to Community Renewal has improved his health – because he is leaving the house more, and engaging in more activities. The staff encouraged him to sign up for a lifestyle course run by the Thistle Foundation to increase his physical activity.

Next Steps

He is currently engaged in an Open University course on Health and Nutrition, with a view to possibly doing a degree in the future. He has diabetes, so it is an area he has an interest in.

He has also been helped by the staff at Community Renewal to get involved in volunteering for two local mental health organisations. He hopes that this will help him to build up his confidence with a view to being able for paid employment. His eventual aim is to get a job, although he is not sure what he would like to do or when he will be ready.

Case Study: Christine

Background

Christine is a client at Community Renewal's Muirhouse project. She has lived in the area all her life. She is 40, has two daughters and has learning difficulties.

Before coming to Community Renewal she was not getting help from anyone else, although she had been to the Citizens' Advice Bureau to seek money advice.

Experience of Community Renewal

She first came to Community Renewal around 2 years ago when she was going through a bad patch in her life and "didn't know what to do". She was in a lot of debt, couldn't afford to pay her bills and felt like "everything was going wrong".

She lives close by so used to pass the office in the shopping centre quite regularly. One day she noticed the signs in the window describing all the different kinds of help that you could get and decided to come in. Although she was nervous, the staff were very friendly and made her feel at ease. She was very stressed and felt that she had a lot of things going on in her life, but a member of staff sat her down, listened to her describe her situation and helped her "break it down into things that they could deal with".

She was helped to get an appointment with a money advice counsellor who visits the Community Renewal offices. He advised her to consider bankruptcy, and explained how to go about it. The staff helped her to apply for bankruptcy.

Staff have also helped her to fill in forms, such as benefit applications, which she finds difficult because she has dyslexia, and she has come to see the person from the Council's housing department who is in the office every week. She also comes in regularly to use the phone.

The best thing about Community Renewal for her is that you can come in whenever you have a problem, and the staff always try to help you, or can offer some sort of comfort if things are going badly. She also likes that they "come to your house – just to see how you are", and says she can't imagine anyone else doing that.

Impact

Before coming to Community Renewal, Christine says she "was not coping with life on day-to-day basis". Although she still feels like she has a lot of problems, she does feel that knowing about Community Renewal "takes a lot of worry off you" because she knows that there is somewhere she can go for help. She describes herself as a "worrier", who used to panic if she got a letter through the door that she didn't understand or was asking for money – whereas now she knows she can bring the letter to Community Renewal and someone here will be able to explain it and help her to deal with it.

She doesn't know where else she would be able to go for help – she had been to the Citizens' Advice Bureau, but felt that "they were not interested" and she "left more stressed than before".

She thinks that having somewhere like Community Renewal is important for the Muirhouse, because there are a "lot of people who come and go" in the area, and there are always people who need help.

Next Steps

Because of her personal circumstances – her daughter is currently in hospital – she doesn't feel that she can really think about the future. She doesn't think she would be able to work, or to do any sort of education or training. However, she intends to keep coming along to Community Renewal.

Case Study: Derek

Background

Derek is 47 and is a client at Community Renewal in Craigmillar. He lives alone and has suffered from severe mental health problems. He moved to Edinburgh from England a few years ago to “get away from bad events in his past”.

Before getting involved with Community Renewal he says he had never had any sort of involvement or help from any organisation. His only sort of contact with anyone was with his doctor.

Experience of Community Renewal

Derek was first contacted by Community Renewal about two years ago when they came and knocked on his door. Because of the way he was feeling at the time he didn't want to go out or to speak to anyone, so he “told them that he had a job, just to get rid of them”. They called back several times – “they were quite persistent” – but each time he would just ignore them or try to put them off. He didn't know why they kept coming, and his attitude was “what has it got to do with you?”.

Because of his condition, he has a poor memory and often forgets to do things. Because of this, and because he was never leaving the house, he eventually ran out of his medication and food, and he was not receiving any of the benefits that he should have been. Eventually he had to go to his doctor who told him about Community Renewal, and he realised it had been them coming to his house.

The next time they came to his house he spoke to them, and they arranged to supply him with food. After a while, once his situation had improved, he agreed to come along to the drop in centre. He had no idea that it was there, because he didn't leave his house often.

Since he started coming to Community Renewal, they have given him a lot of practical help with things that he thinks he probably couldn't manage on his own. They make sure that he has enough food, check that he is getting his medication and help him to fill out forms that he needs to do to receive benefits etc. In particular, he has a very poor memory and often forgets about things like appointments, collecting prescriptions or posting forms. Community Renewal staff “know about every important thing in his life” and will call to remind him if there is something he needs to do. In addition, he feels it is comforting to know that there is always someone who can help him – he feels he can relax with the staff, and they are “like a family who care for him”.

Impact

He says that without Community Renewal getting involved he would “probably be dead”. They helped him at a point when he “was in a very bad situation”. Since he first met the people from Community Renewal he thinks that he has definitely improved, and the help that they give him means that he doesn't think he will end up in a similar situation again – “they wouldn't let it happen”.

Coming to Community Renewal means that he leaves the house more often. Although he is meant to come in every week, he doesn't always make it – he only comes when he is feeling good. If he doesn't come they will call him or come round to his house – although sometimes he will still not answer. When he is feeling good, however, he will quite often drop by, just for a cup of coffee and a chat, because “it makes me feel good to see them”.

Next Steps

Derek is continuing to come to Community Renewal when he feels up to it. He doesn't know what the future holds, but hopes that coming to Community Renewal can help him continue to get better – or at least stop him getting worse again.

Staff have spoken to him about whether he would like to look for some kind of job, or maybe voluntary work, but he doesn't think he would be able. They have also spoken to him about getting involved in some of the activities that they run – such as gardening, walking groups, or going to the gym. He has not managed to take part in these activities so far – either because he has been feeling bad or has forgotten – but he is interested in doing this sort of thing in future.

Case Study: Ian

Background

Ian is 31 and is a client at Community Renewal in Muirhouse. He has lived in the area all of his life.

Before he came to Community Renewal he was unemployed. He has worked in the past – mostly digging and doing tarring on the roads – but had lost his job and was out of work for about 6 months.

Experience of Community Renewal

Ian came to Community Renewal shortly after it opened in 2008. He was out of work at the time and looking for any help he could get to find a job. He had been going to Jobcentre Plus once a fortnight but felt that he was getting very little help from them – the staff there didn't really have time to spend with you ("appointments were only 5 minutes") and were more interested in checking what you had been doing than trying to help you. In addition, the nearest Jobcentre is in Leith, so he had to travel a long distance to get there, which he thought was "a waste of time and a waste of bus fares".

He heard about Community Renewal from several people in the community who had heard that it had recently open and decided to go in to see what they could do for him. Straight away he thought that the staff made him very welcome. They gave him a list of vacancies and companies that were recruiting and let him use the phone to make calls.

He still found it difficult to get a job, but kept on pursuing things "out of respect for the staff" because they put so much effort into finding things that he might be interested in and helping him to apply and "will chase everything up for you".

Thanks to Community Renewal he is now in a plastering course at Edinburgh Telford College which he started last year. This came about after staff from the College came to visit the Community Renewal office to let people know what courses were running and to encourage them to sign up. Ian saw that there were places on a plastering course available and told the staff that this was something he would be interested in. He thought that he wouldn't be accepted because he was too old, but the staff helped him to fill out the application forms and he got a place on the course.

Impact

The biggest impact that Community Renewal has had on Ian's life is that he is now in college and learning a trade that he thinks will serve him well in the future. He thinks he never would have known about the course if it hadn't been for Telford College coming to Community Renewal, and even if he had, probably wouldn't have bothered pursuing it because he thought he wouldn't get in.

He thinks that Community Renewal has had a great impact on the area, and that it has helped a lot of people that he knows with finding jobs. He thinks that "everywhere in Edinburgh should have places like this".

Next Steps

He is still on the plastering course and is enjoying it. He is due to finish the course in August, at which time he hopes to be able to find a job with his new skills. He intends to come to Community Renewal when he has finished his course for help in finding work.

In the meantime he still comes in to Community Renewal occasionally, either to use the phone or computers or just to have a chat with the staff whenever he is passing.

Case Study: Barry

Background

Barry is 25 and has been a client at Community Renewal in Muirhouse for around 2 years.

He had just moved to the area from England, so didn't know where to go for help or to find work. He worked in the building trade before moving to Edinburgh, but it wasn't what he wanted to do.

Experience of Community Renewal

He first heard about Community Renewal from his father, who was long-term unemployed had been going there for help to try to find work. He decided to come in soon after moving to the area to try to find a job – he had applied for some himself but with no success.

He came into the office, and the staff sat him down and went through the registration process with him, asking about what he was looking for, what he was interested in and what sort of help he might need. The staff went over his CV with him, and gave him some pointers on how to “tweak” it to make it look better and to be better suited to the type of job he wanted to apply for. He then took his CV to give to employers that he had seen advertising vacancies in the Community Renewal office and was successful in getting a job almost straight away.

Since then he has had a number of different jobs, and whenever he is looking to apply for something new, he always asks the staff at Community Renewal for their help.

He describes Community Renewal as his “hub” – he comes in almost every day, even if just to use the computers or check his e-mails

Impact

Since first coming to Community Renewal, he has had a number of part-time jobs, mostly in bars and nightclubs. He has also just secured a better paid full-time job which he found advertised through Community Renewal. He puts his success down to the help given by staff in preparing CVs and application forms. He has also learned a lot through the interview preparation training – such as body language, eye contact etc. He believes that “these little things make all the difference”. He thinks that if it wasn't for Community Renewal he would be more or less on his own when applying for jobs and would not be as successful.

He has not been to anywhere like Community Renewal anywhere else that he has lived – he thinks that the difference is the help that the staff can give you and the “welcoming feel of the place”.

Next Steps

He is looking forward to starting his new job, although he also plans to carry on working part-time in the evenings.

He also has a longer term plan to go to college once he has saved up some money. Coming to Community Renewal has helped him to decide what he wants to do and to research his career options.

Case Study: Tracy

Background

Tracy is 29 and is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. She was brought up in the area, although she had moved away for a few years before returning.

She has two children, and prior to coming along to Community Renewal had not worked since before they were born. Her previous experience of employment was in cleaning and housekeeping, which she did not enjoy. She also has a history of mental health issues and has suffered from depression.

Experience of Community Renewal

Her first contact with Community Renewal came around 2 years ago when she was visited at home by two engagement workers from the Craigmillar project. She was initially surprised to be approached at home, as she says "not many people would knock on the door" apart from friends and family.

She decided to come along to the project a couple of days after her first visit from the Community Renewal staff. She says that what drew her along to Community Renewal was the attitude of the engagement workers who came to her door – "they way they spoke made the place seem really positive".

Staff at Community Renewal have given her a range of help – most importantly they have the "facilities that you can use to look for work" (i.e. computers and phones) that she would not be able to access elsewhere. Staff have made her aware of job, training and volunteering opportunities and have helped her to prepare a CV and to fill out application forms.

In addition, Tracy feels that being able to come to Community Renewal has "given her somebody to talk to other than her own family". The staff "treat you like a person" and "take the time to listen".

Impacts

Tracy feels that coming to Community Renewal has improved her life in a number of ways. For example, since October last year she has been working as a volunteer in a local charity shop – something she says "she never would have done" without Community Renewal.

She has also volunteered some of her own time to help out at Community Renewal, looking up organisations that provide help and support and entering their details on the computer. This was something that the staff had suggested to her and she enjoyed feeling like she was helping out.

Overall, she feels that coming to Community Renewal has made her more confident and outgoing, and she is more likely to get out and do things rather than "being stuck in the house all day".

Next Steps

Tracy feels that her top priority is now trying to get a job – to get off benefits, to have some extra money to spend and to help her get out of the house and to meet new people. With the help of staff at Community Renewal she is currently applying for a part time job at a large clothes retailer in the city centre.

She also hopes to be able to access counselling from a mental health worker through Community Renewal's offices – she is currently on a waiting list.

Case Study: Mary

Background

Mary is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. She is 33 and has two children.

Mary was brought up in the Craigmillar area but moved away several years ago, and now lives a couple of miles away. However, she still knows Craigmillar well and often visits her sister, who stays in the area.

Experience of Community Renewal

Mary first found out about Community Renewal through her sister, who had been coming along regularly and recommended it to her – she had found it useful, particularly the social aspect and having somebody to talk to, and had told Mary that the staff were “willing to give you any kind of help that you need”.

When she first came to Community Renewal, she was looking for help to find a job. She wasn't sure if they would be able to help her, because she no longer lives locally, but she explained her situation and they “said it was no problem”. She found the staff all very friendly and “really wanting to help you”, much more so than some other organisations that she had been to look for help.

Staff have helped her to look for jobs and she has come in to use the computer and the phone. They also suggested to her a training course that she might be interested in and helped her to get onto it by helping with the application forms and giving her confidence building exercises to prepare her for it.

She has also accessed a variety of other help through Community Renewal – for example they have helped her to get some furniture for her house through a local charity, and she has come to the project to get support from a money advice counsellor who regularly visits.

The one issue that she raised about Community Renewal is the large crowds of young boys that sometimes come to the project – she feels that they are often not there to use the facilities properly, and that some people can find them intimidating.

Impacts

The biggest impact that coming to Community Renewal has had on her is that she is now on a course at college studying towards an SVQ in care. This has included a 3 week work placement in a local day care centre. She hopes that this will help her to find a good job, as “she always wanted to do something that wasn't dead-end”.

Mary feels that she is much more confident, as a result of coming to Community Renewal and doing her course at college – for example she has noticed that she is now more able to speak up in group situations. She feels that she now “has something to focus on” and “spends more time on herself as a person”, rather than sitting at home all day, cleaning or doing housework and waiting for her children to come home from school. She now looks forward to getting home, knowing that she has done something productive with her day.

Next Steps

She plans to keep coming to Community Renewal every couple of weeks to use the computers to look for work and to get help from the staff with anything she needs.

Her college course is ending in a few weeks, and she feels she “will be bored” when it does. She hopes that she will be able to find a job or another course to do.

Case Study: Lisa

Background

Lisa is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. She is married with two children and has always lived in the area. She has had problems with depression, and had been getting mental health counselling – although this had finished by the time she first came into contact with Community Renewal. She has not worked for several years.

Experience of Community Renewal

Lisa first found out about Community Renewal when staff from the project knocked on her door around a year ago.

Her first reaction was to “panic” because she didn't know who would come to knock on her door. She had never heard about the project until Community Renewal staff came to her house. She was still initially wary as the staff tried to explain who they were, as she found it strange that they were asking her questions about the area and what she wanted to do. However, as they explained to her the sort of things that they did, the activities that they organised and the sort of help that they could give people, she became more interested.

Her main reason for deciding to go along to Community Renewal was that she had been “feeling quite down” and was just looking to find something to do that “might make her feel a bit better”. She got involved with a gardening group that was organised by the project, and enjoyed it. She has also taken part in a cooking group and now regularly goes to a gym in the area which she found out about through the staff at the project. She thinks that “all the staff are really nice” and are “always really helpful”.

She has also been able to access counselling at the Area Focus project. She has suffered from depression in the past and had previously been getting counselling, which she had to travel to Granton for – however, this had come to an end before she found out about Community Renewal.

Impacts

The biggest impact that coming to Community Renewal has had on her is that she now works for the project a few hours a week doing cleaning. She has been doing this for around three months. She had wanted to get a part-time job, but thought that she had little chance because she had no experience. She enjoys “having the chance to do something” as well as the opportunity to earn a little extra money each week.

Overall, Lisa now “feels lot better with herself”, through coming to the project – both because she has taken part in a lot more activity rather than just being “stuck in the house” and because she feels that she now has somewhere to come where she can talk about her problems. For example, she suffered a family bereavement last year and appreciated the emotional support that she got from the Community Renewal staff.

Next Steps

Tracy would like the chance to possibly go to college or do some sort of course in the future. This is something that Community Renewal staff have spoken to her about. However, any training or education that she did would need to fit in with times that

she would be able to access childcare – her youngest child is 2. She hopes to carry on working part-time, but is worried that the project might shut down.

Case Study: Nicola

Background

Nicola is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Muirhouse. She is 29 years old and has a young daughter. She was brought up in the area and has lived nearby for most of her life.

Experience of Community Renewal

Nicola first found out about the Community Renewal project in 2009 from her sister-in-law, who had been coming to the office to get help to find work. Nicola was in college at the time, doing an "Introduction to Care" course, and was hoping to find a part-time or weekend job to earn some extra money.

When she first came to the project, a member of staff sat down with her, helped her to complete an action plan and asked her to come in every week. Whenever she came in she could look on the computer or in the 'job book' for vacancies, and staff helped her to identify what she might be interested in and to fill out application forms or create CVs.

After about 3 months, she managed to find a part-time job in a shop over Christmas. However, this was just temporary.

Nicola thinks that her experience of help to find work through Community Renewal in Muirhouse has been much better than any that she has had with Jobcentre Plus. She claims that advisors at the Jobcentre "try to push you towards just any job", and she had been told to apply for a job that involved lifting and carrying while she was pregnant. In contrast, she says that staff at the Community Renewal project "sit you down and listen to you" and try to help you to find things that you are interested in and would be suitable for you.

Impacts

Nicola thinks that the biggest impact on her life of coming to Community Renewal in Muirhouse has been the help that she can get to find a job. Now that her daughter is slightly older, she is looking to get back to work.

Staff have also helped her with housing issues. She had been placed in a council house in Pilton, but she found it cold and too expensive to heat for just her and her daughter. She mentioned it one week when she was in the office and a member of staff helped her to look for private lets that were available in the area and, when she found one that she liked and could afford, they went through the contract and other paperwork with her to help her understand it. She says that she wouldn't have known how to get a new flat on her own.

Next Steps

Nicola would like to get a job in a care home – she says that several members of her family do this kind of work and it is something she is interested in. It is also something she has studied at college. She would consider going back to college if she had to, but in the main she is "really hoping to get a start somewhere".

Case Study: Simon

Background

Simon is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. He is 46 years old and lives alone, and has been living in the area since last year.

He has previously worked as a scientist in one of Edinburgh's universities, but has suffered from severe mental illness that resulted in him being hospitalised for a time. When he first came to Community Renewal he was receiving help from a mental health therapist that he had been referred to by the hospital.

Experience of Community Renewal

Simon first found out about Community Renewal when staff from the project came and knocked on his door about six months ago. Initially he was "not quite sure" who they were or what they wanted, but as they talked to him he "gained a favourable impression" of them and felt that they seemed helpful. The staff left him with some literature about the Area Focus project – nevertheless, it was not until they had come to visit him in his home around 4 times that he decided to come along to the project.

His main reason for eventually coming along was that the staff had mentioned the possibility of being able to help him access some additional counselling. He was also interested in what other sort of help might be on offer.

He says that he would never have known that the project was there if the Community Renewal staff had not come to his house and told him about it – in fact he initially could not find the project's premises using the map that they had given him, and had to ask for directions.

Impacts

Simon thinks it is too early to say what sort of impact coming to Community Renewal will have on his life. Although he has not been coming to the project for very long, he has found that the "drop-in" nature of the service is of benefit to him, as he can come in whenever he feels he needs someone to talk to, rather than having to make an appointment or wait for a particular time. He has found the staff to be "all very friendly and helpful". However, he is concerned that the "open" nature of the facilities, combined with how busy the offices often are, can make it difficult to talk in confidence.

Next Steps

Simon's priority is to manage his mental health condition and to "carry on getting better". He intends to continue to come to Community Renewal to use any help that they can give him, and hopefully to access some further counselling.

While staff have mentioned to him that they can give him help to get back into work, he feels that this is some way off. He is interested in doing some voluntary work, but his doctors have advised him that he is not yet ready.

Case Study: Mina

Background

Mina is 26 and is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus Project in Muirhouse. She has lived in the area for around three years since moving to Edinburgh from north Africa. She is married and has two young children. Before moving to this country, she had some work experience as a secretary.

Before coming to Community Renewal, she had been getting help from Community Organisation for Race Equality (CORE) and from Community Employability.

Experience of Community Renewal

She first heard about the Community Renewal project from CORE. However, it was not until one of her friends – who had been coming to the project to get advice about her financial situation – recommended it to her that she decided to come along for the first time to see what sort of help was on offer. In particular she was looking for help to get into volunteering to help update her work experience, and for help to look at the possibility of becoming a childminder. Her first visit to Community Renewal was around September 2010.

Her first impressions of the Community Renewal office were that it was very welcoming – she thought that even when she came for the first time, “it didn't feel like coming to somewhere strange or official”.

She finds it particularly useful that she can come to Community Renewal to use the phone, computers or printing – since so many things are advertised online, she would find it difficult without access to the computers in particular. While she has been to other local organisations that offer internet access, she prefers to come to Community Renewal, both because of the fact that the staff there can “give you help with everything”, and because the relaxed and safe atmosphere means that she can just drop in anytime and let her children play while she works on the computer or talks to the staff. If she had one suggestion for how the project could be improved, she would like to see more computers available for people to use, since “sometimes it can get very busy”.

Impacts

Although she has only been coming to Community Renewal for a relatively short time, she feels that she has been helped in several ways. For example, she was helped to find a volunteering placement for a local third sector organisation doing administrative work for one afternoon a week, and to arrange childcare, with the help of the North Edinburgh Volunteer Centre, who staff at Community Renewal had put her in touch with.

In addition, staff have been helping her to fill out the necessary application forms to become a registered childminder, as well as helping her to meet a representative from the Scottish Childminders Association.

With the help provided by Community Renewal and other organisations, she hopes to begin childminding soon. She intends to keep coming along to the office to use the computers, to get information on childminding groups and to find out about any activities for parents or families that they are organising. In particular she is interested in taking part in the walking group for parents that she has heard about.

Case Study: Liam

Background

Liam is 17 years old and is attending Community Renewal's Area Focus Project in Craigmillar. He left school around a year ago, soon after he turned 16. He did not enjoy school – he says he found it boring and “did not get on with the teachers” and would often not attend. He left with no qualifications.

In the period after leaving school, he says he was doing “nothing”, just “mucking about” with his friends.

Experience of Community Renewal

Liam first came into the Area Focus project around six months ago. He says he had been walking past with one of his friends and decided to come in “just for a look” after seeing the sign outside.

Staff suggested that he take part in the pilot Pre-Get Ready for Work programme that was being run at the project, and he agreed because he thought it would give him some qualifications. He also thought that it would be “a laugh” because all his friends were also doing the course, and because it sounded like the course would include fun activities and “things that weren't as serious”. He was also attracted by the offer of a training allowance for attending the course.

Impacts

Liam failed to complete the Pre-Get Ready for Work Programme. He was asked to leave because of his violent behaviour with only two weeks left to complete. He says however that he did enjoy most of the course, and wishes that he had been able to finish it.

Nevertheless, he is continuing to attend Community Renewal. He is currently coming in “pretty much every day”, to talk to the staff and to get help in looking for jobs and training courses.

One major impact that he described was that thanks to the help he has had from Community Renewal – both during the Pre-Get Ready for Work Programme and from staff on a more informal basis – he now knows how to put together a CV, whereas before he “wouldn't have even known where to start”.

He is also now in contact with a careers adviser from Skills Development Scotland who has visited the Community Renewal offices. He says he “never would have gone” to see a careers adviser on his own.

Liam thinks that if he hadn't come to Community Renewal or found out about it he would probably “still be doing nothing”.

Next Steps

Liam would eventually like to get a job, ideally in construction or as a mechanic. However, he realises that as he has no qualifications at the moment, he would be likely to need to get involved in some sort of education or training before he is able to get the kind of job that he is interested in. He would like to apply for college.

With the encouragement and help of Community Renewal staff, he has signed up with Rathbone in the city centre, who he hopes will be able to take him on a course or work experience.

Case Study: Vicky

Background

Vicky is 19 years old and has recently begun attending Community Renewal's Area Focus Project in Craigmillar. She left school when she was 16, at the end of 4th year, with only a few Standard Grades – although she says she now wishes that she had “stuck with it” and thought more about what sort of job that she wanted before leaving.

She is currently working as a trainee with a local hairdresser. However, she says that she does not enjoy it, feels that the wages are very low and thinks that she is not learning enough from her employer. She plans to leave in order to find a job that she is more interested in.

Experience of Community Renewal

Vicky first came to the Area Focus project premises in May this year. She heard about the project through her boyfriend, who had been helped to get a job by the staff. She had been impressed by this, as she had thought that he “didn't really have the motivation” to find work before coming along to Community Renewal in Craigmillar.

She was looking to find some information on how to fill out application forms and CVs – she says she had looked online herself at some jobs and training courses, but “really didn't know what to do”.

She initially came along to Community Renewal with a friend, because she “didn't want to go somewhere new alone”. However, she found the staff at Community Renewal “all very nice and welcoming”.

Impacts

As Vicky has not been coming to Community Renewal in Craigmillar for very long, she cannot say what sort of impact it will have on her life. However, she does say that she has already found out about things – such as CVs, and how to find out about college courses – that she didn't know about before.

In addition, she has been able to meet with a careers advisor from Skills Development Scotland who has come to visit the Area Focus project, so that she can find out more about the job or training options that are open to her.

Vicky feels that it is very good for the area to have somewhere like Community Renewal that people can come – particularly younger people who do not get on well at school. She describes Craigmillar as “a rough area – with a lot of stealing and things like that going on”. She admits to being “a bit wild” when she was younger, and thinks that if there had been somewhere like Community Renewal for her to come to when she was leaving school, she might have been helped to think more about what she wanted to do and what sort of qualifications she might need.

She has also recommended Community Renewal to her younger sister who is also looking for advice about getting into work or education.

Next Steps

Vicky's ambition is to work as a prison officer – she has had several friends in prison, and it is something that has interested her for some time. She wants to find out what sort of qualifications she would need for a job as a prison officer, and hopes that the

staff at Community Renewal will be able to help her to apply. She is also interested in the possibility of doing voluntary work to build up some relevant work experience.

Case Study: Chantelle

Background

Chantelle is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. She is 19 years old and has always lived in the area. Since leaving school at the end of her 5th year, she has had short-term temporary employment in retail and has been doing some volunteering in a local charity shop.

At the time she first came to Community Renewal, she was unemployed and looking for work. She was attending Jobcentre Plus every fortnight to sign on. In the past she has also had help from Cyrenians.

Experience of Community Renewal

Chantelle has been coming to the Area Focus project since January this year. It was recommended to her by her brother, who had been attending the project to get help with looking for a job. He had heard about it from one of his friends.

When she first decided to go along to the project, she was looking for any sort of help that she could get to find a job. She had been working in a temporary retail job over the Christmas period, but this had come to an end, so at that time she was unemployed.

She initially came in with a friend, to see what sort of help was on offer from Community Renewal. Her initial impressions were that all the staff seemed very laid back, and mentioned the relaxed atmosphere in the Community Renewal offices – "like walking into somebody's house".

She was told about the Pre-Get Ready for Work programme that was being run, and decided to go on it. Her main reasons were that she wanted to "keep busy", and she thought that it would make it easier to get a job.

Impacts

Chantelle thinks that the help she has had from Community Renewal, both through the Pre-Get Ready for Work course and from staff on an ongoing basis, will make it more likely that she will be able to find work – although she does say that she thought that she "would have been able to get a job by now". In particular, she has found the help she has had around CVs and application forms, and the assistance that staff have given her to prepare for interviews, most useful. She also says that coming to Community Renewal is a much better way to find out about jobs or training courses that are advertised than going to the Jobcentre.

One impact that she has definitely noticed is that she is now a lot more confident in being able to speak to employers and to people on the phone.

She thinks that if she hadn't found out about Community Renewal in Craigmillar, it is likely that she would mostly be looking for work on her own.

Next Steps

Chantelle is continuing to look for work, and is looking to do anything that she thinks might help her to find a job. She is particularly interested in going to Jewel and Esk college to do a course on nursing. She found out about the course through coming to Community Renewal, and she thinks that the staff will be able to help her with filling out the application forms etc. However, she says that she would also need a

part-time job if she was to go to college to help her pay her way, so she will continue to look for work in the meantime.

Case Study: Andrea

Background

Andrea is 47 years old and is a single parent with one son at primary school. She is a client at Community Renewal's Area Focus project in Craigmillar. She has lived in the area for "a long time".

Before coming to Community Renewal she was looking for work or for some training towards a childcare qualification, as well as volunteering at a local youth group that her son had been attending.

Experience of Community Renewal

Andrea first came to the Area Focus project around September 2010. She had been to the building before when it was a local health project, and saw the sign outside when she was passing so decided to come in. She had also heard from other people that she knows in the area that Community Renewal staff had been knocking on their doors. Although she was interested in getting help to look for work, her main reason for coming in was to see if she could use the gym – since in its previous role the building had fitness equipment.

Ever since coming to Community Renewal, Andrea says she has found the staff friendly and easy to talk to – they are like "normal people". She thinks that compared to staff at other organisations, the people who work at Community Renewal are "willing to go a wee bit further" to try to make sure that people get the help that they need – and take more time to find out what they are interested in and "get to know you properly".

Impacts

Andrea thinks that the greatest sort of help that she has had from Community Renewal staff has been in learning how to put together a CV that will look attractive to employers. She feels that having her skills and experience set out in a CV has boosted her confidence, and has made her feel like she has something to offer to employers.

She also thinks that she is more likely to find a job because staff at Community Renewal constantly keep her up to date with job opportunities that become available, and will phone her if they find out about any that she may be interested in. They have also given her practical help such as giving her assistance with using computers and sending her CV on to potential employers.

She says that since coming to Community Renewal, she has had a lot of job interviews, and thinks that she only needs "a bit of luck" or for the right job to come up. However, the jobs that she can apply for depend whether the hours would fit in with the school day or with any available childcare.

Next Steps

Shortly after first coming to Community Renewal, she gained a place on a training course working towards an SVQ Level 2 qualification in childcare. This is shortly coming to an end, and she hopes that Community Renewal will be able to help her to find a job that will make use of her qualification and get some work experience. She is interested in becoming a childminder, and the staff have given her help to meet any requirements and to complete the registration process.

Case Study: Joanne

Background

Joanne is in her mid-20s and is a client of Community Renewal's Muirhouse project. She lives with her partner and whilst they each have a child, neither of the children lives with them due to a history of drug use, prison and homelessness.

Joanne worked immediately after leaving school and appeared to have enjoyed the jobs she had and the relationships she had with colleagues. She has not worked since having her child.

Experience of Community Renewal

Joanne was attracted into the Community Renewal office by the notices in the window providing information on jobs and training opportunities. Getting back into work was something that both Joanne and her partner wanted to do but they were finding it difficult as a result of their criminal records.

To help her move towards work, Community Renewal has helped her put together a CV, use the phone and computers to enquire about training and employment opportunities, set up an email account so she can apply for jobs online and access courses to improve her employability (e.g. work skills course at a local college, basic IT training through a community group). Whilst these have been part-time, short courses they have helped build up Joanne's confidence and she would like to build on these. She feels that her discussions with Community Renewal staff have also made her more focused on getting into work. She recognises that whilst getting into work in her mid-20s is proving difficult it would be much more difficult when she is older and that she has a real chance of turning her life around.

Joanne has experienced a number of health problems and finds it helpful that she can come in and discuss her problems with staff. Key to this is the fact that staff are friendly, caring and supportive and that Joanne trusts them. They have also helped her access services that help reduce stress levels and improve her health including drugs counselling, a smoking cessation course and swimming.

Community Renewal have also helped Joanne and her partner in a crisis situation, referring them to the Christian Centre in Pilton to access food when their benefits had been stopped.

Impact

Joanne feels she is much more positive about the future than she was before she came to the Area Focus project. She has identified a number of courses that she would like to pursue including IT training and first aid and feels that these will help her find work. She is open to taking any job but one of the consequences of working with Community Renewal is that she is more focused and is aiming higher than she would otherwise have done – thinking in terms of a 'career' rather than just getting a job.

The other main impact is that she feels more secure in that she has somewhere to turn if she has a problem. She describes the project as her "sanctuary". She feels comfortable speaking to staff as they don't judge and "don't look down their noses at you".

Next Steps

Joanne has identified, with Community Renewal's help, a number of courses that she believes will help her in finding work. At the time of the case study interview she was pursuing these. She is also continuing to apply for jobs.

Case Study: Catherine

Background

Catherine is in her 40s and is a client at Community Renewal's project in Muirhouse. She has lived in the area for 9 years. In 2005, Catherine developed a physical disability as a result of an illness and had to leave employment. Prior to her illness developing, she had been a cleaner – a physical occupation that she could not continue to do with her disability. Her disability makes it difficult to get around (for example, she struggles to get down the stairs in her block of flats) and this had led to her becoming quite isolated – only getting out of the house once every 3-4 days.

Experience of Community Renewal

Catherine was initially engaged through the 'door knocking'. Two female project staff approached her and explained that Community Renewal was about to open an office in Muirhouse and told her about some of the activities that would be on offer. Catherine initially got involved in a women's group which met on a weekly basis. The group undertook a range of activities, many of which were focused around the fun day Community Renewal were organising (e.g. fundraising, making posters to advertise fun day, making chocolate truffles to sell, etc.).

Catherine has also needed support around benefits issues. Her application for Incapacity Benefit was refused and Community Renewal helped her appeal against this decision. They ensured that she had the correct forms and helped her fill these in. Community Renewal has also helped her access a Community Care Grant and to pay off her rent arrears.

Catherine comes into the project offices 2 or 3 times a week. The Community Renewal offices give her somewhere to go ("for a wee blether") and she finds the staff friendly and helpful. She knows that the staff are looking out for her and values this. For example, during the bad snow at the end of 2010, she was unable to get out of the house and Community Renewal staff would call her regularly to check if she needed anything (milk, bread, etc.) and would bring it to her flat for her.

Due to Catherine's disability, she has not wanted support to look for work and it is important to her that Community Renewal have not pursued this – instead focusing on the help she actually needs.

Impact

The main impact on Catherine's life is that she is less isolated. Before getting involved with Community Renewal she left her flat rarely and had limited contact with anyone in the local area other than "a few brilliant neighbours". Through the community activities she has made new friends and tries to get out of house every day. She also has regular contact with the project staff and has been put in touch with a 'befriender' through the Health in Mind project. Both of these have also helped reduce her isolation and make her feel there is somewhere to turn if she has a problem.

Next Steps

At the time of the case study interview, Catherine was about to move to another local authority area to be closer to her family. The move will also see Catherine move into a ground floor flat which will help her with her mobility. Her new home will be close to another of Community Renewal's projects and she plans to continue to use their services.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Community Renewal Staff

Paul McColgan	Executive Director
Nigel Green	Area Focus Project Manager
Lucy Holroyd	Craigmillar Team Leader
James Riordan	Muirhouse Team Leader

Stakeholders and Funders

Jenny Ewing	Capital City Partnership
Brian Martin	City of Edinburgh Council
David White	Edinburgh Community Health Partnership
John Palmer	Edinburgh Community Health Partnership
Heather Macnaughton	Castlerock Edinvar
Brenda Tonner	Muirhouse Housing Association

Service Providers

Emma Kyle	Café K
Linda Sergeant	City of Edinburgh Council, Housing
Mary Ann Stanton	City of Edinburgh Council, Housing
John McGowan	City of Edinburgh Council, Library Services (Muirhouse)
Martina McChrystal	City of Edinburgh Council, Neighbourhood Partnership
Graham Rowan	City of Edinburgh Council, Neighbourhood Partnership
Tom Reid	City of Edinburgh Council, Working for Families
Phil Harris	Community Ability Network
Steven Wright	Edinburgh City Mission
Shona McAllister	Get On
Colin Millar	Hunters Hall Housing Cooperative
Alex Galloway	Jewel and Esk College
Alison Milne	Keep Well
Barbara Webster	North Edinburgh Childcare
Bill Anderson	Skills Development Scotland
Helen Ewing	Volunteer Centre Edinburgh
Nick Woodhead	Volunteer Centre Edinburgh