



## The Local Area Agreement Economic Development E8: VCFS Tackling Worklessness

# Increasing Employability Through Volunteering





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- June 2008:** Lancashire delivery plan to engage with the Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector in tackling worklessness
- July 2008:** VCFS partners applied for pump priming grant to fund a local project to 'reach' disengaged out-of-work-benefit claimants
- August 2008:** 12 Projects launched
- September 2008:** Projects monitored
- December 2008:** Projects monitored
- January 2009:** Project closure workshop
- February 2009:** Project closure reporting





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- Preston DISC
- Access Lancashire (x2) Fylde and Wyre
- INTAG – Ingol and Tanterton Action Group
- Fishwick Rangers Youth Development Service
- NCBI – National Coalition Building Institute
- Lancaster Community Learning Network
- Burnley Wood Residents Association
- The Salvation Army
- ITHAAD
- Inward House
- Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service





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What the Project was able to offer to participants

- Real 'Work Experience' in the Voluntary Community Faith Sector
- Community based learning
- Job search skills, Employability Skills and Jobs Brokerage
- Confidence Building and Increased Self Esteem
- Multi-faceted support programme
- Qualifications and vocational skills training
- Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL & IT
- Signposting to services and placements
- Personal development for socially excluded Asian women
- Bespoke workplace training for drug & alcohol service users



## Key Learning Points

- Paperwork/file management takes a long time, not balanced by the income available
- Set courses don't always match customer needs
- Mixed messages – clarify what support partners offer e.g. Job Centre Plus
- Some beneficiaries need one-to-one support, but resources are limited
- Length of project is limiting, participants want to do more
- Should have used the partners more – to share experiences – NETWORK been useful
- Be clear about communication channels and commitments
- Participants sometimes were concerned for the security of their benefits
- Beneficiary group are 'furthest away' from the labour market
- Diversity of our organisations leads to a great diversity of 'beneficiaries needs'
- No continuation funding to support beneficiary progression
- 'Credit Crunch' – less jobs available, even few opportunities for customer group



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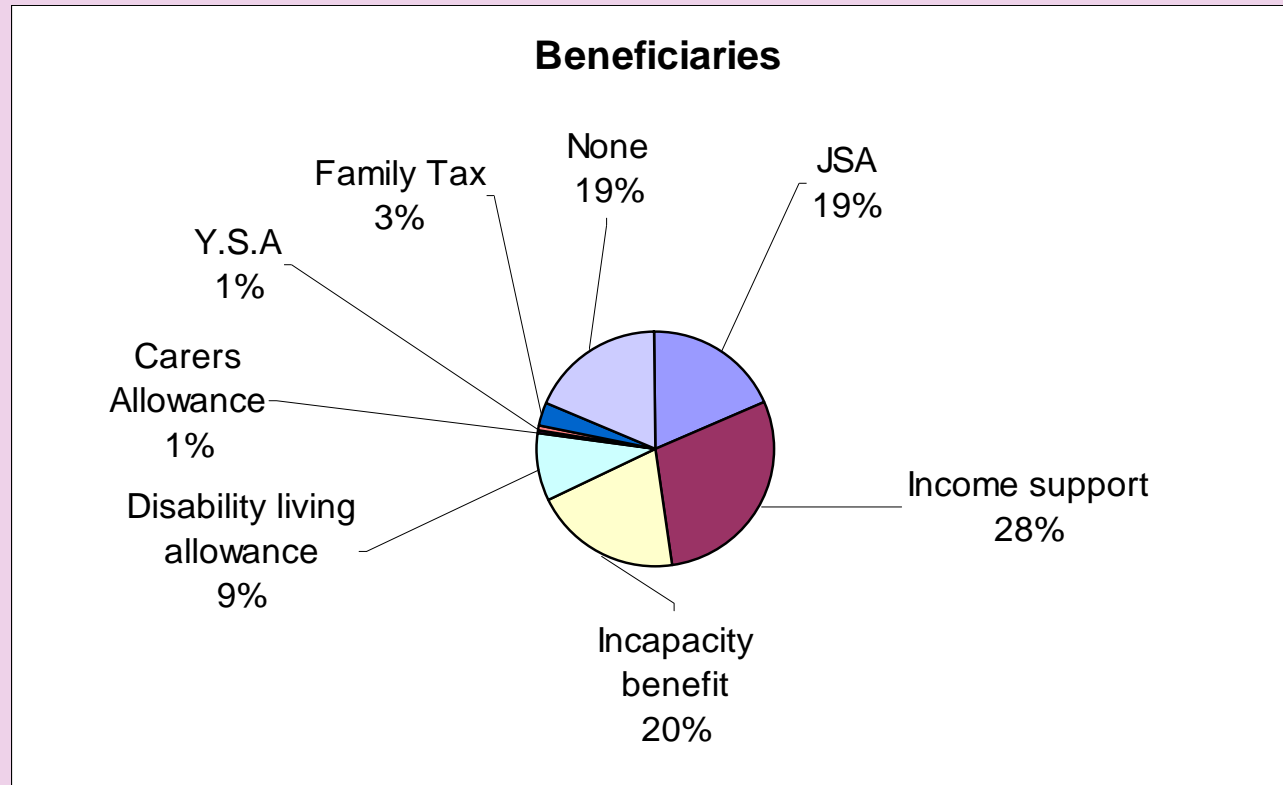
### What difference it has made to the Organisations

- New partnerships and connections – opportunities to work together
- Despite low expectations, some customers have made significant progress on the route to work
- Increased VCFS activity - by having more volunteers involved
- Capacity Building - Organisations and Local Communities
- Project Beneficiaries have helped others in the same/similar situations
- Engaged with the most excluded members of Asian Female Community
- Beneficiaries are more confident to access local services, activities and training – soft skills



The Lancashire  
Partnership

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**Females – 99 (59%) Males – 69 (41%)**  
**Ethnic Minority – 32% all Beneficiaries of**  
**which 78% were Women**



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### What difference it has made to Beneficiaries

In their own words:-

- *“I feel more confident and inclined to offer my time and experience”*
- *“It has been a great experience within which I have learnt many skills which will be useful elsewhere“*
- *“will put it on my CV“*
- *“ I have gained experience and qualifications, I got a job out of it!“*
- *“I am more confident and looking for a job“*



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### What can partners do to ensure sustainability?

#### Our Recommendations ...

- Core Funding - contribution to overheads - sustained 'grassroots funding'
- Minimum three year commitment with realistic outcomes.  
(Those furthest away = hardest to reach and have the longest journey)
- Inclusive of all 'Economically Inactive' people (Don't wish to turn people away)
- Acknowledge the VCFS at LSP/Worklessness Focus group level and county wide network
- Adequate tracking of services to ensure speedy and effective referrals
- Pre-contemplation → action → train opportunities
- Create a Beneficiary Forum – a platform to express/exchange experiences and identify specific needs



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**Our Recommendations ...**

**More money + less barriers**

**=**

**added value + achieve targets + make a difference**