



## **Thornton Lodge Action Group**

# **Evaluation of the Community Grants funded Pre-Employment Routes2Work Project**

**November 2012**

**Report from Lancaster Consulting (HR) Ltd**

Contact:

Jude Lancaster

Lancaster Consulting (HR) Ltd

Beehive Mills

Hebble End

Hebden Bridge

HX7 6HJ

Tel: 01422 846934

07979452053

[judelancaster@lancasterconsultingweb.co.uk](mailto:judelancaster@lancasterconsultingweb.co.uk)

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank those who agreed to be interviewed and who helped with this research, including:

### **Project Team:**

Ibrar Hussain  
M. Osaman  
Farah Zaman

Chairperson, Thornton Lodge Action Group  
Manager, Thornton Lodge Action Group  
Tutor

### **Beneficiaries**

Samia Kauser  
Nasreen Akhter  
Rubia Haneef  
Samina Munir  
Farkhanda Zaffer

### **Project Stakeholders:**

Malvern Goodall  
Lee Steel

Director, Crosland Moor Community Learning Centre  
Your Consortium

## **Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Purpose of Evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Methodology for the evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Background</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Operating environment for the project</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Project Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Beneficiaries</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Delivery content and beneficiary feedback</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9. Progress towards intended outputs and outcomes</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>10. Project management</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>11. Impact and Measuring Success</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>12. Future demand and Project sustainability</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>13. Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1 Interview questions for Delivery Team</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Interview questions for Stakeholders</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Interview questions with beneficiaries</b>	<b>22</b>

# Thornton Lodge Action Group “Routes2Work” Project Evaluation

## 1 Executive Summary

Lancaster Consulting has been commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the work Thornton Lodge Action Group (TLAG) has undertaken in their delivery of the ESF Skills Funding Agency funded Community Grants Project, “Routes2Work”.

Section 2 of the report sets out the purpose of the evaluation. TLAG applied for Community Grants funding in the Autumn 2011 round of calls for applications. The programme ran from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012. This report, reviewing the progress the delivery team has made over the life of this contract, aims to:

- introduce the project and its background
- review progress made towards intended outcomes and milestones of the project
- consider the need for the service on offer and the impact of the project on beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project
- evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted by the project team and the project’s management
- assess the potential of the project for informing future practice and

We also seek to summarise the learning gained during project delivery, with a view to informing future practice and investment

Section 3 explains the methodology applied by the research team in preparing this report. The evaluation consisted of desk research and semi-structured interviews with the delivery team, stakeholders in the public sector who work alongside the project and beneficiaries of the project. Bilingual phone interviews with beneficiaries were supplemented by an analysis of evaluation sheets. Background paperwork was also scrutinised by the evaluation team.

Section 4 provides a background to the project, setting out the origins and activities of Thornton Lodge Action Group (TAG) . It introduces the ESF Community Grants funding stream and its responsible body, Your Consortium, whose role is to manage this funding on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency and to call TAG to account for project delivery.

Section 5 offers some insight into the community served by the project. The Crosland Moor and Thornton Lodge areas of Huddersfield are amongst the most deprived in the country. Scoring poorly on all measures of deprivation: unemployment, Council tax benefit, free school meals, poor health indicators, high crime rates and low educational attainment, this community presents serious challenges which Thornton Lodge Action Group has been seeking to address.

Section 6 of the report sets out the project’s aims and objectives as described in the application for funding:

***“..to provide a pre-employment programme which, through engagement, training and volunteering, will act as a “Stepping Stone” to new work opportunities... to give people new skills and employment opportunities and raised self-esteem and self-confidence.”***

It also sets out the targets agreed with Your Consortium as the contractual

obligations for successful project delivery.

Section 7 introduces the beneficiaries of the two courses delivered by the project team. 25 learners benefited from the courses; all of them were women of South Asian origin across all age ranges. This group was largely new to formal learning and many learners were unconfident and unclear about how to go about finding employment. Most had significant English language support needs which they were keen to address.

Section 8 examines the course content which offered a comprehensive introduction to job seeking. The scheme of work was an imaginative one, mixing practical, interactive learning with external visits to relevant sites such as the Job Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau. All learners acquired a health and safety qualification which they saw as a useful addition to their CV and helpful to their job search. Beneficiary feedback was extremely positive and all felt that the course was comprehensive and useful.

Section 9 measures the project outcomes against stated targets and finds that in most cases, targets were both met and exceeded. The tutor identified a creative way to work with learners to measure soft outcomes, using Outcome Stars, which included increased confidence, improved English and developing a CV.

Section 10 considers the effectiveness of project management and includes feedback from Your Consortium on the project team's performance. Overall project management was strong although the team faced a sharp learning curve in terms of managing ESF paperwork. In a small number of cases, allocation of responsibilities could have been better aligned.

Section 11 sets out the impact of the project as measured by retention and learner satisfaction. All those beneficiaries interviewed felt much more confident and were inspired to continue learning at the end of the course.

Section 12 confirms that there is considerable demand for courses of this kind and also for basic skills and vocational courses delivered in the community. The project team is seen as well placed to continue delivery of this kind.

The evaluators enjoyed their interviews and found the delivery team professional, helpful and wholly committed to making the project a success. Overall, the project received a good bill of health from the evaluators and they have made the following recommendations where they believe improvements are possible.

**Recommendations:**

- i) That further consideration be given to course delivery arrangements for future courses including the number of weeks over which the course runs and the inclusion of voluntary work as part of the course.**
- ii) That funding be sought for IT equipment so that learners in Thornton Lodge are not forced to travel outside the area in order to access IT and on line facilities.**

**iii) That funding be sought to run a Level 1 – 3 childcare course for interested learners as a basis for the creation of a network of bilingual childminders to meet the demand for childcare in the local community.**

**iv) That for future courses, the Course Tutor is involved both in pre-course assessment and in managing arrangements for any visits identified in the Scheme of Work and that s/he is paid for this administrative time.**

**v) That further funding be sought to deliver accredited ESOL, key skills and other suitable progression courses for this cohort to be delivered in the local community in order to ensure that this group stay in learning after their positive experiences on this course.**

## **2 Purpose of Evaluation**

Lancaster Consulting has been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the work Thornton Lodge Action Group (TLAG) has undertaken in their delivery of the ESF Skills Funding Agency funded Community Grants Project, "Routes2Work".

TLAG applied for Community Grants funding in the Autumn 2011 round of calls for applications. The programme ran from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012. This report, reviewing the progress the delivery team has made over the life of this contract, aims to:

- introduce the project and its background
- review progress made towards intended outcomes and milestones of the project
- consider the need for the service on offer and the impact of the project on beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project
- evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted by the project team and the project's management
- assess the potential of the project for informing future practice and

We also seek to summarise the learning gained during project delivery, with a view to informing future practice.

Lancaster Consulting was established six years ago, although its diverse team of associates have decades of experience in carrying out research, investigations, running focus groups and undertaking evaluations as well as community development, the provision of advice and guidance to community based organisations, capacity building and employment related training. The majority of our work is delivered in West Yorkshire to public, private and civil society clients although we have worked nationally, again for the voluntary sector and public bodies.

The lead researchers were able to bring to the evaluation an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the local communities in Kirklees, and in particular the minority ethnic women who were the beneficiaries of the project. The multi-ethnic research team have first hand knowledge of the experiences of the beneficiaries as they manage day to day challenges, culturally, linguistically, economically, politically and socially as they take their first steps towards employment. The researchers believe this provides some insight into the work of the delivery team in delivering this contract successfully.

## **3 Methodology for the evaluation**

The evaluation of the "Routes2Work" project focussed on the following elements:

- Desk research into the terms of reference for ESF Community Grants funding and Thornton Lodge Action Group's application for funding, a study of delivery team minutes and marketing and publicity for the project
- Individual face to face semi-structured interviews with the delivery team
- Telephone based semi structured interviews with 5 beneficiaries (a 20% sample)

- Telephone based semi structured interviews with the course tutor and learning host at one of the delivery centres
- Telephone based interviews with the funding body officer responsible for supervising the contract.

## 4 Background

The Thornton Lodge Action Group (TAG) was established in 2006 following the closure of the local Neighbourhood Advice and Training Centre in order to fill a void in support for the local Thornton Lodge community. The Group recognised the high levels of disadvantage in the area, amongst the 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in the country and were committed to making practical changes to the quality of life of local residents. The profile of the community shows currently 67.8% of the population is largely Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic. Qualification levels are low and unemployment high.

A key strand of the work undertaken by TAG is to work closely with the local community to fill gaps in services. They have achieved this by working with the local authority, the NHS, Children Centres, youth groups and other council initiatives. Since its inception, the Action Group has run a number of programmes targeting specific groups in the community. They have sought to tackle anti-social behaviour by running sporting and outward bound activity for 8 12 and 13 – 19 year olds, English as Second Language training for minority ethnic women, tackling obesity initiatives both with young people and adults through dance, sport and healthy eating events. Recently a new project has started to get local residents interested in gardening and a group of women and young people are developing an allotment at the local community centre. The group also offer basic advice sessions every week, a useful source of intelligence about the issues affecting local people.

The Thornton Lodge Action Group is based in Thornton Lodge Community Centre although many of its activities also take place at Crosland Moor Learning Centre. Its administrative base is at Voluntary Action Kirklees in Huddersfield town centre.

Sourcing funding for these activities is a constant challenge for the staff and volunteers at TAG and until now, they have relied on one-off pockets of funding as they are publicised. However, they have now established an ongoing relationship with Kirklees Council's Young People's Service and the local Police which helps fund their youth activities.

The current round of Skills Funding Agency ESF Community Grants budget was first launched in 2007, running to 2013, providing grants of up to £12,000 nationally but capped to £10,000 in Yorkshire, to allow small third sector organisations, which would not normally be able to access ESF, to apply and secure funding through simplified arrangements. These grants support a range of activities that help individuals in the hardest to reach communities to get closer to and enter the labour market.

For North and West Yorkshire, Your Consortium, based in Knaresborough, manages the fund. Your Consortium has grown from the work undertaken by North Yorkshire Learning Consortium. NYLC was established in 2007 to enable providers within voluntary and community sector to compete effectively for funding opportunities,



particularly in learning skills and employability markets. Your Consortium has been extremely successful, securing over £4 million of new money for the sector within their first 3 years.

The application process is a competitive one aimed at organisations with a turnover of less than £300,000. The financial probity of the applicants are assessed and the project aims need to demonstrate innovative practice. The beneficiaries of the project have to meet the following criteria:

- Not be employed (or must work part-time for less than 8 hours a week)
- Be over 18 years old
- Be hard to reach (ie live in the most disadvantaged areas and/or face barriers to learning and work)
- Have the right to work in the European Union.

## 5 Operating Environment for the Project

Crosland Moor and Netherton ward is one of the most densely populated wards in Kirklees. (22.4 – 32.3 persons per hectare – ONS Ward Mid Year 2010).

Unemployment rates are amongst the highest in the Borough, running at between 6 – 7.5% claimant count in June 2011 in the ward as a whole although considerably higher in the Thornton Lodge area. The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows the area is classed as being in the worst 10% in England. Scoring poorly on all measures of deprivation, Council tax benefit, free school meals, poor health indicators, high crime rates and low educational attainment, this community presents serious challenges which Thornton Lodge Action Group has been seeking to address.

The percentage of Black and Minority residents in the area is high; at 68%, mostly of South Asian origin. With many first generation immigrants settling in the community, English language challenges impact on many people's ability to access help and employment. In Thornton Lodge (Lower Super Output Area), 70% class themselves as belonging to the Pakistani ethnic group and 72% as Muslim. (The figures for England as a whole are 1.4% + 3.1% respectively). Median Gross Household Income is £17,177, compared to £28,413 for England as a whole.

## 6. Project Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Community Grants investment were clearly stated in the grant application:

***"..to provide a pre-employment programme which, through engagement, training and volunteering, will act as a "Stepping Stone" to new work opportunities... to give people new skills and employment opportunities and raised self-esteem and self-confidence."***

The beneficiaries were black and minority ethnic women who were identified as a group in particular need of support because of the problems they experience in accessing work outside the home because of their domestic responsibilities, cultural

restrictions, linguistic challenges and the realities of discrimination in the workplace. However, the project was open to all sections of the community.

The output targets for the project were as follows:

- 5 Community voluntary work placements
- 20 unemployed people assisted with employment support consisting of applying for vacancies, how to present at interview and developing a tailored CV
- 20 unemployed people showing evidence of increased job search activity by keeping a job diary
- 15 young people gaining a qualification after completing a minimum of 10 hours of study and completing a module alligned to individuals' career goals.

Through this learning journey, a number of soft skills would be developed including:

- Increased confidence
- Raised aspirations
- Improved ability to access wider public services i.e. colleges, careers service, training providers etc
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Increased feeling of empowerment
- Decreased sense of isolation.

The staff team felt that the project's aims were to engage non-traditional learners who were anxious to join the labour market, but feel that they do not know how to start. The course was seen as a stepping stone on the journey to employment. A decision was made therefore to engage an experienced, bilingual English as Second Language tutor to run the Employability course to help them develop speaking skills and overcome any barriers relating to the technical aspects of job search.

However the staff individually identified a much broader social impact from the project's interventions and evidently found these highly motivating and inspiring:

- to help people become economically active and more assertive
- to make a difference to people's lives and help them get a better life
- upskilling local people
- getting people out into the community
- working in partnership in the community
- ensuring health and well being through raised aspirations and confidence.

The research team was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff team who clearly believed the work they were undertaking was valuable and felt that their contribution was making a meaningful difference both to the individual beneficiaries with whom they were working and the wider communities within which they were working.

They focused on the potential for the project to help individuals furthest from the labour market to gain employment. The project was seen as enabling women in particular to develop skills and confidence. One stakeholder saw it as a unique

opportunity for many beneficiaries to explore life outside the home and consider, possibly for the first time, the feasibility of getting a job.

## 7. Beneficiaries

The project sought to engage 20 beneficiaries over 2 training courses. This target was achieved and exceeded with 25 beneficiaries supported overall. Recruitment was relatively straightforward as the TAG team had already built up a waiting list of people interested in support into work from participants in other TAG activities such as Keep Fit and gardening. At the start of the first course, there was a list of 45 clients. All were notified and the courses were filled on a “First Come, First Served” basis. Provided below is an equality breakdown of the clients:

<b>Table 3: Ethnicity breakdown of beneficiaries</b>		
<b>British Indian</b>	<b>British Pakistani</b>	<b>British Bangladeshi</b>
4	20	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	

<b>Table 4: Age breakdown of beneficiaries</b>				
<b>Not known</b>	<b>16 - 29</b>	<b>30 – 39</b>	<b>40 – 49</b>	<b>50 +</b>
0	6	11	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>			

<b>Table 5: Gender breakdown of all beneficiaries Years 1 &amp; 2</b>			
<b>Male</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>		

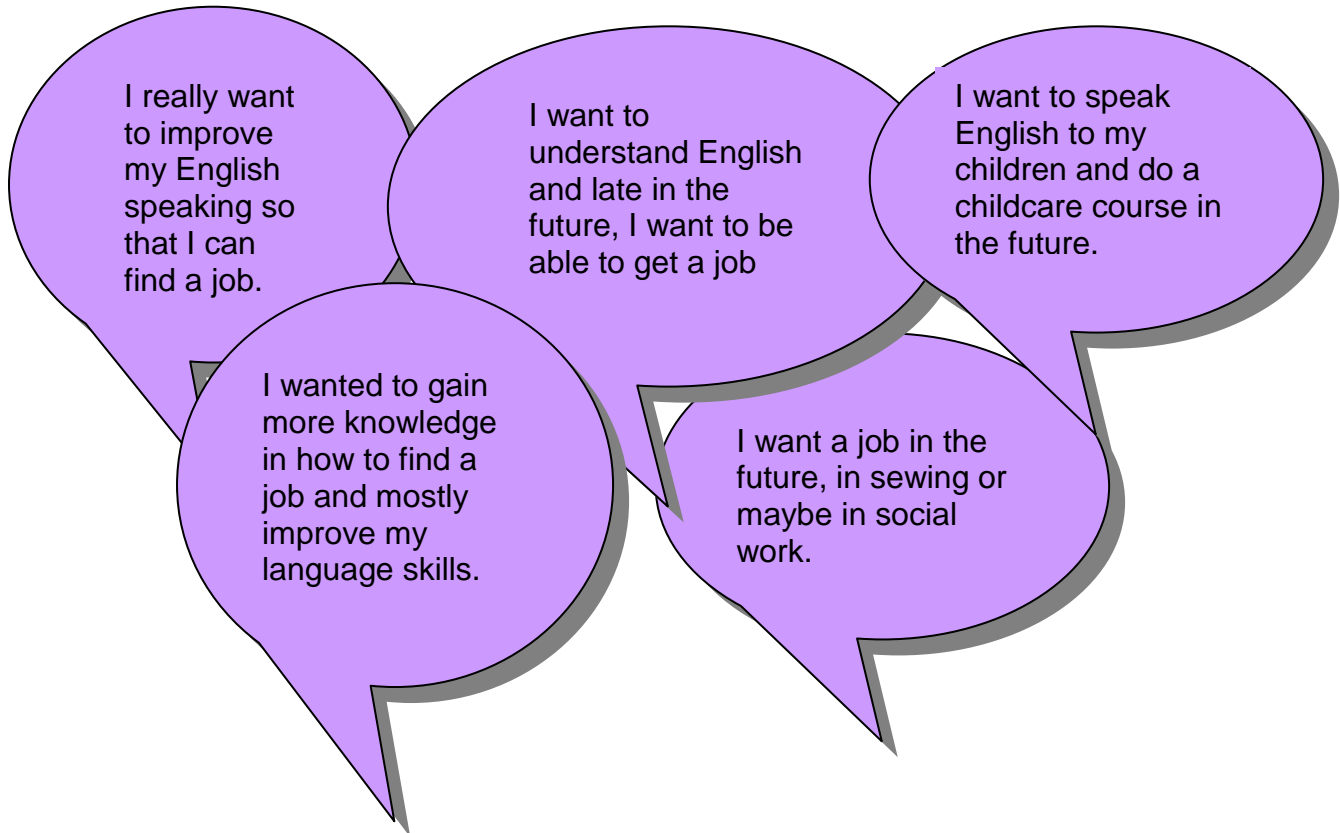
Hence 100% of all beneficiaries were women of South Asian origin. The project team attracted women across all age ranges.

The staff team described the beneficiaries as minority ethnic women with little confidence or self esteem at initial engagement. Most had not considered work outside the home as a viable option because of their domestic responsibilities before joining the project. Some had husbands or other family members who believed that outside work might “spoil” them or would “not be the Islamic way”. Many were unclear what they could do but wanted to supplement the family income and fit this in round the family responsibilities. The tutor noted that there has been a significant shift in the aspirations of the Asian women she works with, possibly driven by the experiences of some whose husbands have left them for younger women and have found themselves needing to earn their own money to run the household. More and more women are now coming forward with a genuine desire to get a job.

The research team were unable to undertake an in-depth study of each beneficiary’s file however, 5 beneficiaries were interviewed individually. Of these, four were born outside the U.K. and came to this country to join their husbands, one in 1993, one in 2002 and two in 2003. One beneficiary preferred not to comment about her personal

circumstances. Four of the five had worked in the past, two as teachers in Pakistan, one as a cleaner and one at Crown Textiles. One had worked as a volunteer at the Huddersfield Islamic school crèche. All had withdrawn from the labour market to have children and manage their domestic responsibilities. Four out of five were anxious to improve their English language skills.

Beneficiaries were asked why they wanted to do the course. Responses included:



## 8 Delivery content and beneficiary feedback

The courses ran for 2.5 hours per session and two sessions were held each week so that each learner was actively engaged on the course for five weeks (25 guided learning hours). This approach has clear benefits in terms of retention as involvement in two sessions each week helped ensure learners established a rhythm of attendance and stayed focused on the course and the group they were working with. However, the tutor had concerns that for this target group, who were still far from the labour market, it would have been better to run the course over 10 weeks, giving learners the chance to fully absorb their newly learnt skills, to try them out in a work experience placement and then return to the course to assess their progress and determine next steps.

The course tutor sought to ensure that the students “got value” and delivered the course through experiential learning. Each learner with enough confidence to use a computer started the course with an on line assessment of their core skills using the “Go On” tests. For those unable to use a computer, the tutor carried out verbal and

written tests to assess English language, literacy and numeracy levels.

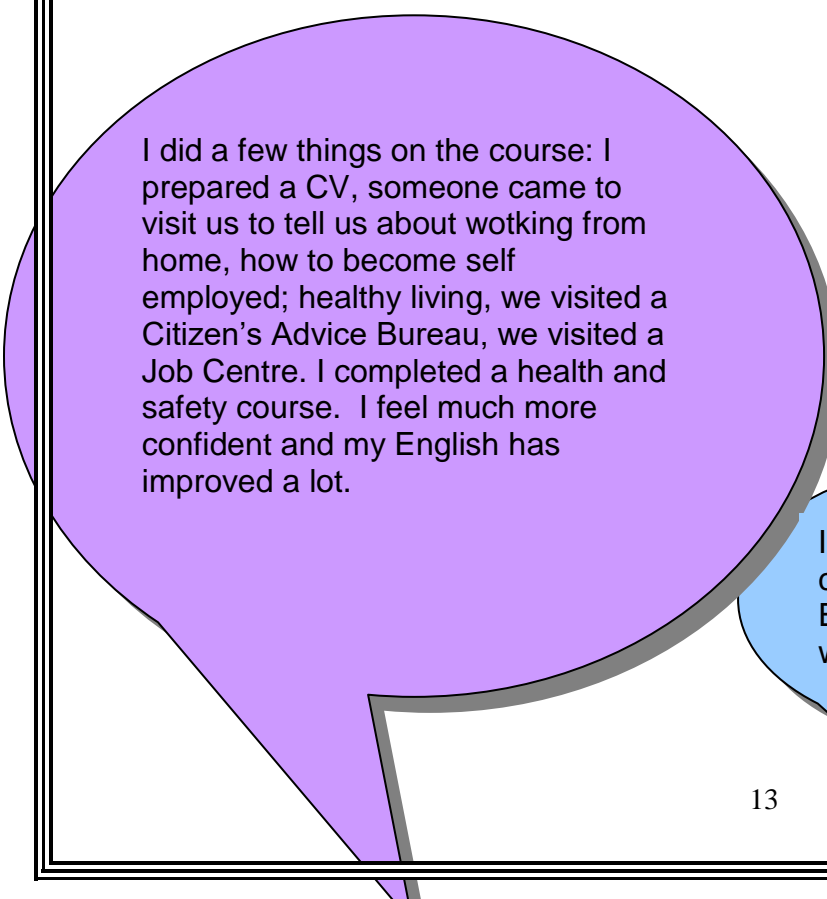
Course content included:

- Why learners wanted to work
- CV building
- Sourcing jobs including a visit to a Job Centre
- Reading the advert
- Writing applications from open adverts and graded material i.e. job description and employee specification
- Health and Safety at Work (including qualification
- Getting paid including looking at real payslips
- Information about homeworking as an option
- Understanding and locating support services e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau and Voluntary Acton Kirklees (including visits).

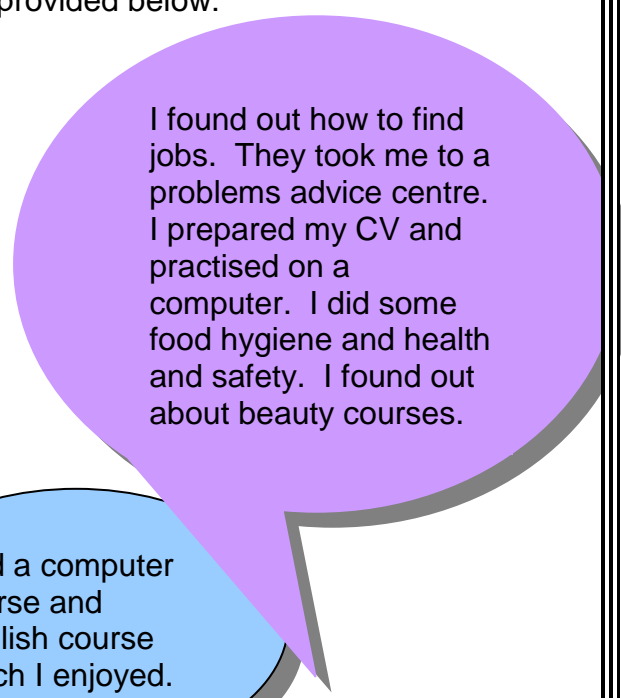
One of the key aims of the course was to ensure that learners understood how to locate job vacancies “on line”. This proved difficult for the cohort studying at Thornton Lodge Community Centre as there is no IT suite there. Learners had to travel both to Crosland Moor and Hillhouse Learning Centres to access computers which not only incurred travel costs but also lost valuable learning time. This is clearly a resource badly needed in the Thornton Lodge area.

Given the high level of English language support needs by many of the learners, the decision to use a bilingual ESOL qualified tutor was invaluable. It emerged that many learners were unfamiliar with key terms including what a CV or Personal Profile is or what a USB stick is.

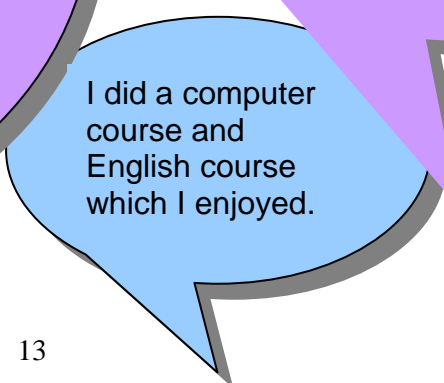
The feedback from the learners interviewed by our bilingual researcher was extremely positive. Learners were invited to add individual comments about their experience of the course and a few examples are provided below:



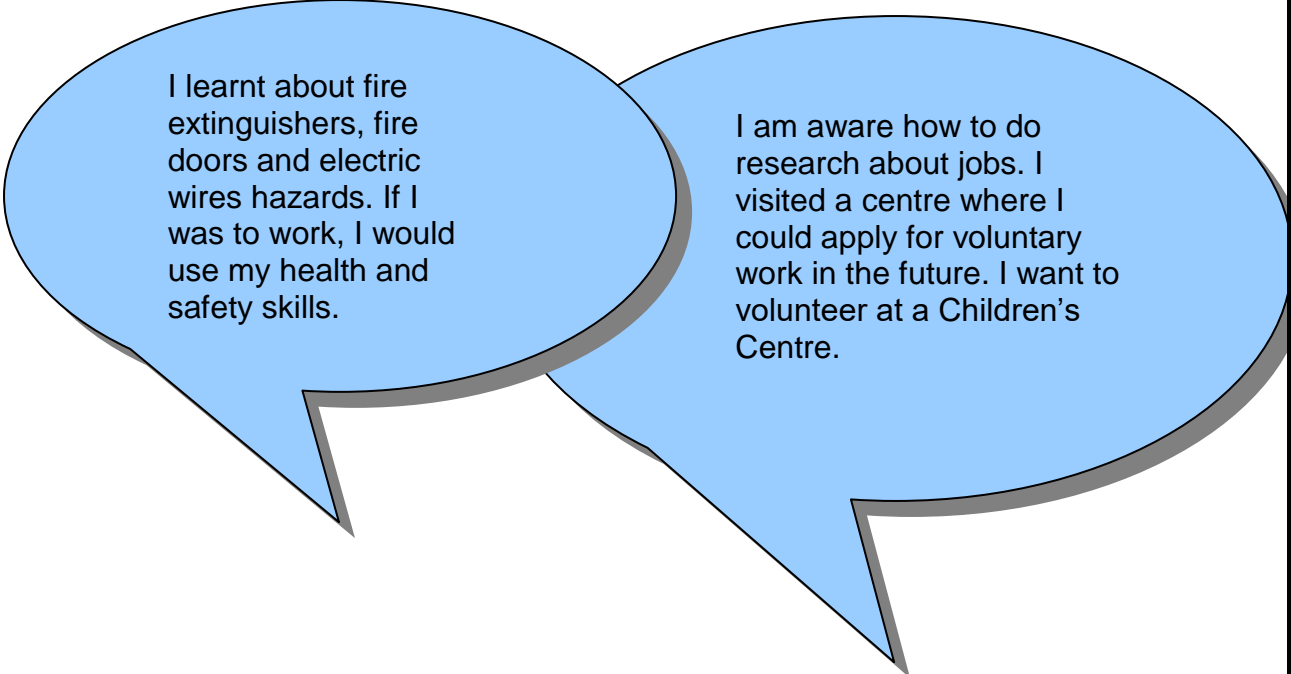
I did a few things on the course: I prepared a CV, someone came to visit us to tell us about working from home, how to become self employed; healthy living, we visited a Citizen's Advice Bureau, we visited a Job Centre. I completed a health and safety course. I feel much more confident and my English has improved a lot.



I found out how to find jobs. They took me to a problems advice centre. I prepared my CV and practised on a computer. I did some food hygiene and health and safety. I found out about beauty courses.



I did a computer course and English course which I enjoyed.



I learnt about fire extinguishers, fire doors and electric wires hazards. If I was to work, I would use my health and safety skills.

I am aware how to do research about jobs. I visited a centre where I could apply for voluntary work in the future. I want to volunteer at a Children's Centre.

Childcare proved to be an issue for some of the learners. Although the project team had a budget for childcare, demand outstripped supply and much time was spent trying to source qualified childminders in the local area. There is a clear market for Asian childminders and this could prove to be a source of employment for some of the learners in future, following appropriate training.

**Recommendations:**

- i) That further consideration be given to course delivery arrangements for future courses including the number of weeks over which the course runs and the inclusion of voluntary work as part of the course.**
- ii) That funding be sought for IT equipment so that learners in Thornton Lodge are not forced to travel outside the area in order to access IT and on line facilities.**
- iii) That funding be sought to run a Level 1 – 3 childcare course for interested learners as a basis for the creation of a network of bilingual childminders to meet the demand for childcare in the local community.**

## **9. Progress towards intended milestones and outcomes**

The team made strong progress against the outputs and outcomes agreed in the Your Consortium contract and in many cases exceeded planned targets.

The table below sets out outputs achieved against targets:

<b>Target</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
5 Community voluntary work placements	8 Learners attended a 3 hour volunteering workshop offered by Voluntary Action Kirklees
20 unemployed people assisted with employment support consisting of applying for vacancies, how to present at interview and developing a tailored CV	25 learners engaged 20 learners completed 12 week course
20 unemployed people showing evidence of increased job search activity by keeping a job diary	No formal job diaries kept. Crosland Moor class spent two sessions using IT to carry out job search Thronton Lodge class spent one session at Hillhouse doing job search
15 young people gaining a qualification after completing a minimum of 10 hours of study and completing a module aligned to individuals' career goals.	22 Learners gained Health and Safety at Work Certificate
	20 Learners received one to one IAG

The project team also set itself a number of soft outcomes they hoped to achieve with the learners during the learner journey, including:

- Increased confidence
- Raised aspirations
- Improved ability to access wider public services i.e. colleges, careers service, training providers etc
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Increased feeling of empowerment
- Decreased sense of isolation.

While some of these were achieved simply through learner engagement and retention, others were more hard to measure. The course tutor explained that her priority was to encourage learners to express themselves and interact with each other. For several of the learners, this was their first formal learning experience as adults and the course provided a systemetised opportunity for relationship building and regular contact with new friends.

The Scheme of Work also included opportunities to find out about local facilities such as Citizens Advice Bureau and all learners attended the CAB as a source of ongoing advice. They also looked on line for information such as job vacancies, College prospectuses etc.

To measure soft skills such as increased confidence, the course tutor gave each learner an Outcome Star and negotiated with each learner individually about what they might hope to achieve by the end of the course. Some chose information based targets such as "Knowing what a CV is" or "Improve my English" while others set themselves targets of improved confidence, getting a voluntary work placement and even "Get a Job". This one learner achieved.

## 10 Project Management

This project was the first learning and skills contract won by Thornton Lodge Adction Group although they have delivered Pre-Entry ESOL as partners previously. The delivery team felt that the contract gave them the opportunity to develop their expertise in managing the tutor and the paperwork, monitoring progress, evaluating learning and giving feedback to the funders. They also had to take full responsibility for undertaking risk assessments and health and safety audits which they felt developed their skills.

ESF funded projects are reknowned for the complexity of their paperwork and the rigour required to meet funding requirements. The Link Officer at Your Consortium explained that he judged learning providers by two criteria: the quality of the learner journey and the contractual obligations i.e. paper based evidence of meeting the contract.

He acknowledged that the project team had to face a steep learning curve in order to fulfil all the administrative requirements. He admitted that he had to “do some hand-holding” to ensure that the paperwork was submitted in the right order and that financial expenditure was appropriately evidenced. However, the project team “got there in the end” and the paperwork met the required standard.

He was also more than satisfied by the quality of learning he witnessed when visiting the project. He met the tutor and he saw that the learners were fully engaged with plenty of interaction and effective use of resources. He was also satisfied that the learners reached their desired goals for the course.

He found working with TAG was a positive experience and he had no hesitation in stating that they would be welcome to apply again in future to work in partnership with Your Consortium.

Staff morale was high and there was a clear sense of team spirit and cooperation across all team members. Roles and responsibilities were clearly allocated although there seemed to be some blurring of responsibilities between the Chair, who also undertook pre-course assessment and IAG, and the tutor, who undertook initial assessment. Similarly some of the practical arrangements for the course e.g. organising visits, taxis etc appeared to fall between the Manager and Tutor.

Despite these minor issues, the project was found to be efficiently managed and client satisfaction to be exceptionally high.

### **Recommendation.**

**iv) That for future courses, the Course Tutor is involved both in pre-course assessment and in managing arrangements for any visits identified in the Scheme of Work and that s/he is paid for this administrative time.**

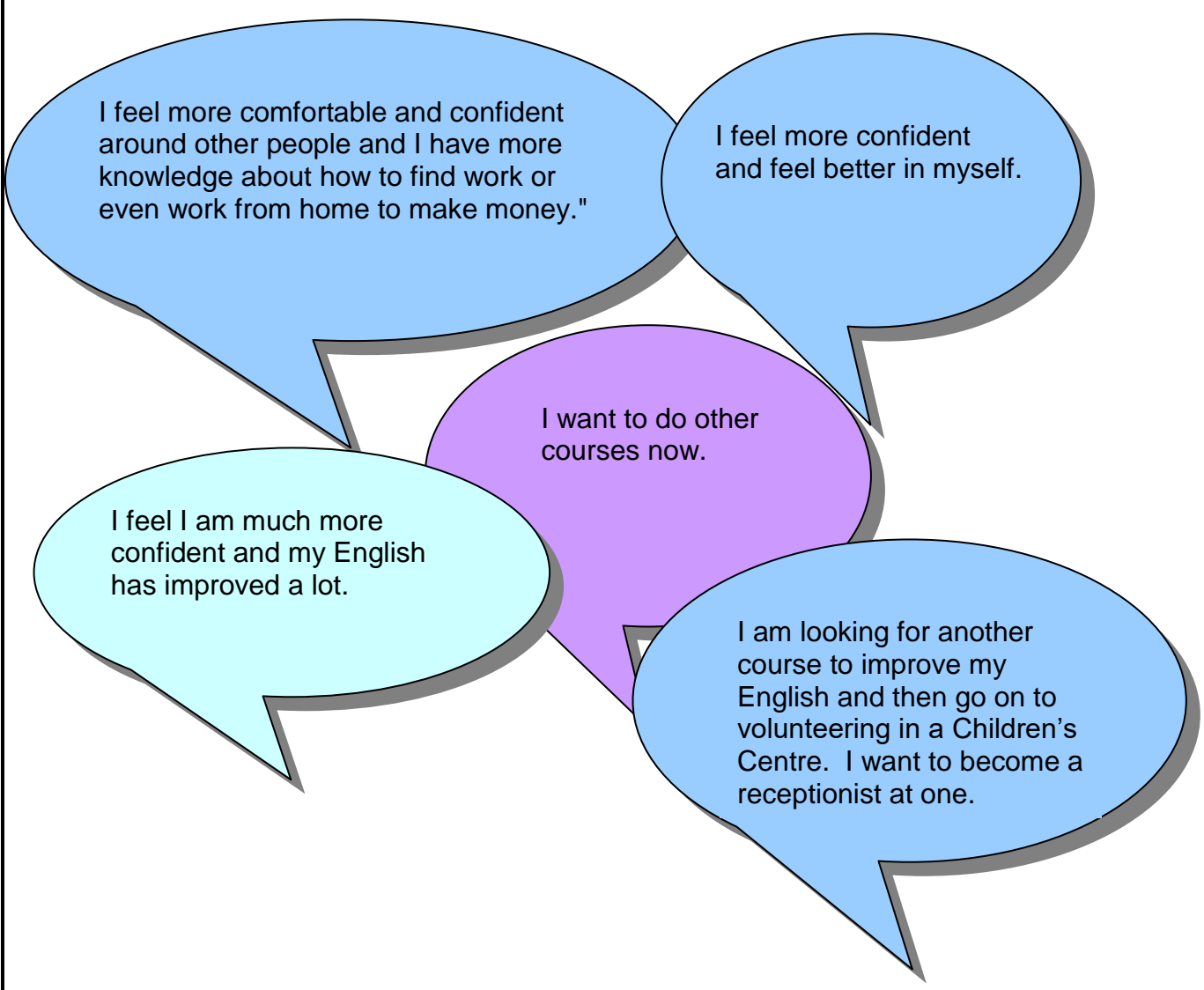


## 11 Impact and measuring success

The project team were eloquent in their view that the initiative was successfully engaging individuals who are farthest from the labour market. They were confident that they were successfully engaging women who had not previously worked and that their one to one support and encouragement was life changing.

The project evidently successfully engaged high numbers of women of South Asian origin. Satisfaction rates were extremely high as a sound measure of success. Individual beneficiaries were extremely positive about the impact of the project on their lives and on their ability to move on to work experience or further learning..

Statements included:



I feel more comfortable and confident around other people and I have more knowledge about how to find work or even work from home to make money."

I feel more confident and feel better in myself.

I want to do other courses now.

I feel I am much more confident and my English has improved a lot.

I am looking for another course to improve my English and then go on to volunteering in a Children's Centre. I want to become a receptionist at one.

Retention levels were high and learners commented that the short sessions were useful as they were able to fit in their other responsibilities round the classes. They also appreciated being able to learn in women-only groups. The research team felt

that the project achieved its soft goals in terms of developing the confidence of the learners and in raising their aspirations to continue learning with a view to gain employment over the longer term.

## **12 Future demand and project sustainability**

Several of the learners explained that having the course in their local community made a big difference to them and that they did not feel ready to travel into Huddersfield town centre to attend the College there. They reported feeling intimidated and nervous about making such a big step. It was clear to the research team that community-based learning provided an ideal learning environment for this group of learners and that progression routes were limited due to the lack of funding for localised provision.

Given the high levels of deprivation and unemployment in the area served by TAG, there is clearly a demand for both unaccredited and accredited learning to be delivered in the local community as a stepping stone to further learning and work. Culturally sensitive course provision through single sex classes, the use of bilingual tutors and the incorporation of ESOL into wider curricula are all now tried and tested methods of learning delivery and if funding can be acquired, demand is likely to be high. In particular, vocational courses targeting known gaps in the market would be recommended such as childcare (see Recommendation 8 iii above). As this project delivered solely to women, a course targeting men, possible with a view to supporting learners into higher skilled work, would be a useful service in this community.

### **Recommendation:**

**v) That further funding be sought to deliver accredited ESOL and other suitable progression courses for this cohort to be delivered in the local community in order to ensure that this group stay in learning after their positive experiences on this course.**

## **14 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The evaluation team draw the following conclusions, based on the research findings and make specific recommendations set out at the end of the relevant sections above.

The project was well managed and the project staff are both professional and dedicated, offering a personalised service to beneficiaries who have in the past been reluctant to come forward to access learning or to consider employment as a viable alternative to benefits. The project provided a valuable opportunity for the project team to develop skills in the delivery of learning and skills contracts and with some minor realignment of roles and responsibilities, it is envisaged that the team will be able to successfully deliver much needed courses in the Crosland Moor and Thornton Lodge communities in the future.

The project team made excellent progress against milestones and outcome targets and in many cases have exceeded them.

Satisfaction levels amongst learners were very high and the research team was struck by the positive reports from those interviewed about their sense of increased confidence and empowerment. The project team set out to give the learners a positive experience and this was fully achieved with learners keen to move onto next steps, both in terms of formal learning and work experience.

**Compiled by Jude Lancaster & Samra Dad, Lancaster Consulting (HR) Ltd  
November 2012**

# Appendix 1

## Interview questions for Delivery Partners

1. What do you consider were the aims and objectives of the project?  
For project leads: what made you apply for the funds?
2. Can you describe your role in project delivery and experience of similar projects?
3. For the delivery team: How would you rate the management of the project  
1 – 10
4. For the delivery team: What instructions were you given about project delivery and what did you think of them?
5. How did you engage the learners? What publicity methods did you use?
6. Can you describe the progress you made against your targets?
7. What impact were you hoping for?
8. How do you measure the success of the project?
9. What challenges, if any, faced the project delivery team?
10. What lessons have you learnt to date – success factors, pitfalls, insights?
11. Is there anything you'd like to do differently next time?
12. If there was more funding available, what activities do you think Thornton Lodge Action Group should prioritise?

## **Interview questions for Stakeholders**

To start, can you just tell me about yourself – Check full name, Job Title.  
Organisation, office location.

1. What do you know about the Skills Funding Agency ESF Community Grants Routes2Work project Thornton Lodge Action Group ran earlier this year?
2. What do you think the aims and objectives of the project were?
3. How does it link with your work? Did you have involvement?
4. What impact were you hoping for, if any, from the project?
5. Do you know how the project went? If so, how would you measure the success of the programme?
6. Is there anything you think the team could do better if they run a similar project in the future?
7. If there was more funding available, what activities do you think Thornton Lodge Action Group should prioritise?

## **Interview questions for Beneficiaries**

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?
2. How did you find out about Routes2Work?
3. What did you think of the publicity?  
Score 1 to 10: 1 being not at all, 10 being excellent and fully met.
4. Why did you want to do the course? What did you hope to get out of it?
5. Did it meet your expectations? Score 1 to 10:  
1 being not at all, 10 being excellent and fully met.
6. How did you rate the teacher/tutor? Score 1 to 10:  
1 being not at all, 10 being excellent and fully met.
7. Did you need any help to attend the course e.g. childcare? Were you given the help you needed?
8. What did you do on the course?
9. What impact, if any, did the course have on you?
8. What are you going to do now? E.g. another course, work experience, job etc