

## Embracing Diversity

Bury EST has been successful in bidding for European funding for a major new 3 year project. The European Social Fund has agreed to fund the £3.5m 'Embracing Diversity' project that is being promoted jointly by Bury EST and Stockport Employment Services. This is a further evolution of our very successful relationship with Stockport and follows on from our 2000 joint project, 'Equal Partners'.

We have formed a Development Partnership with Stockport to plan, deliver and monitor the project, which has ambitious targets. The objectives of the Partnership at this point are:

### To transfer the model of supported employment to other disadvantaged groups...

We will be basing two staff with the Asian Development Association in Bury (ADAB) and one worker with the National Children's Homes (NCH) Extra Mile project. In addition, we will have one Employment Officer based with health centres to assist people to retain their jobs following referral to the service from GPs.

Stockport Employment Services will be working with single parents, ex-offenders and drug & alcohol misusers. Both agencies will continue to offer a full disability service.

### To test a new Human Resources driven model of supported employment with employers...

We will shortly be establishing an Employer Forum on Diversity in Bury to explore workforce management practice relating to issues such as ethnicity, disability, age and gender. The Forum will identify and exchange best practice in personnel policy and procedures. We already have agreement from a number of important local employers that they wish to participate.

### To write an agreed template or 'district model service' for welfare to work services...

We will be working with a wide range of organisations to point the way in which we should all be working together to improve access to employment. We will be talking to people from initiatives such as Connexions, the Learning + Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus to improve the co-ordination of services and explore new learning routes. We hope that this template will prove useful to other local authorities.



Manager, Huw Davies, was delighted with the grant. "This is great news for Bury. We're really looking forward to working again with our colleagues in Stockport and expect

this project to make a real difference to the profile of supported employment. We want to promote diversity within the workplace, and create opportunities for disadvantaged groups that have so far been excluded from the labour market. We will be organising local networks for users who are keen to help develop the project. We'll also focus on employers to test practical support and assist them in developing diversity policies and procedures on recruitment and retention through the Employer Forum."

Embracing Diversity is one of 85 projects approved in the UK but is one of only 24 focussing on employability. The projects will link to Government policy makers through "thematic network groups" and will also be able to influence European policy makers through annual meetings.

Bury EST is expecting over £750,000 in additional European funding over the next 3 years as a result of this success. This will enable us to maintain staff at the end of our Working Start project as well as create a number of new posts. We will shortly be recruiting 6 Placement Officers, a Project Manager, Employment Consultant and a part time Clerical post.

We have formed the *Futuro* partnership to link with transnational partners in Reggio Emilia (Italy) and Zamora (Spain) to exchange ideas and best practice. The transnational partnership will be holding a series of forums to identify and exchange best practice over the next 3 years and plans to issue reports from the thematic seminars held 3 times a year. The first seminar will take place in Manchester in September 2002 and will examine methodologies.

## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Best Value</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Current Initiatives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Permitted Work</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Joint Investment Plan Update</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>News in Brief</b>	<b>6</b>

# BEST VALUE

	Questions	Performance Indicator
ACCESS	Is the service available to all who wish to use it?	Percentage of referrals from minority ethnic groups of working age reflects the make-up of the local community.
	Do people who use the service feel that they have a say in the way the service is delivered?	Users feel that they have access to a mechanism for influencing service quality.
	Do people who want to use the service feel that information is easily found and easy to understand?	Service information is available in a variety of formats.
QUALITY OF SERVICES	How long are clients waiting after they have been referred to the service?	Average period of time from receipt of a referral to start of development plan.
	Do clients receive regular support once they are in employment?	Percentage of active users having plans reviewed and updated twice yearly.
OUTCOMES	How many clients get paid employment as a result of being referred to Bury EST?	Percentage of people moving into paid employment following completion of an initial action plan.
	Of all the clients who found employment what is the average wage they receive?	Average rates of pay.
	How many clients having found employment leave their job after only a short time?	Percentage of clients leaving employment in the first 6 months or before the end of the contract, whichever is sooner.
	How many clients work full-time or more than 16 hours a week?	Percentage of service users securing employment over 16 hours per week.
EFFICIENCY	Does the service provide value for money?	Gross annual cost of service per person supported in paid work at 31st March.
	Does the service take advantage of all sources of funding available?	Percentage of income generated from grants outside their employing authority.
	How effective are we at securing job opportunities from employers?	Number of employers visited per job secured.
	Does the service provide the right sort of support?	Percentage of active users having plans reviewed and updated twice yearly.

Bury EST has been working with other supported employment services in the North West to prepare for the Government's Best Value review process. Agencies from Bury, Stockport, Oldham, Blackpool and Wigan have come together to fund a project to develop performance indicators for the industry.

Lynda Smethurst has been based with Bury EST while she undertook this work. Part of the project involved visiting each of the agencies on several occasions to map out the paperwork that each service uses and from this, Lynda has compiled some standardised formats for each agency to use.

We are exploring the possibility of using standardised data collection to make it easier to compare performance between agencies. Bury has extensive experience of using the Asset database system and has recently been piloting the Gemma database developed by Castle Personnel in Australia. It is thought that each of the agencies will be introducing one of these systems.

Bury MBC is currently in the early stages of planning a Best Value review of its disability services in terms of how well they promote independence and a high quality of life. There will be a number of opportunities for people to feed their views into this process and we'll bring you more information as we get it.

Best Value is the process in which Local Government can examine how effectively and how efficiently they deliver services. The process is rooted in consultation with users and providers of services as well as the general public.

### **Best Value is about:**

- ensuring that public services are responsive to the needs of citizens, not the convenience of service providers.
- ensuring that public services are efficient and of a high quality.
- ensuring that policy making is joined-up and strategic, forward looking and not reactive to short-term pressures.

The process aims to make service providers go through a process where they:

**Challenge** whether the service should be provided at all.

**Compare** the outcomes, cost and efficiency of local services with other providers.

**Consult** with users of the service on how well it is responding to their needs.

**Compete** and collaborate to deliver better quality services at affordable costs.

Links...

[www.idea.gov.uk/bestvalue](http://www.idea.gov.uk/bestvalue)

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

[www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm](http://www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/bestvalue/bvindex.htm)

## Your opinion counts...

We are looking for your views about these performance indicators. Please send us your comments so that we can improve the service.

## Diversity in Action!

Bury EST has organised a major conference for employers in the Bolton and Bury areas. Titled, Diversity in Action!, the conference takes place at the new Village Hotel, Heap Bridge, Bury on May 28th. The event will be of particular interest to local employers who are seeking to improve their policies and procedures around the employment of people with a disability. Diversity in Action! is part-funded by the European Social Fund through the Objective 3 programme and so is free to

employer delegates attending.

The programme features a keynote presentation (he doesn't do speeches!) by Philip Friend OBE of Churchill & Friend Ltd. Phil is a nationally renowned presenter and trainer on disability and employment issues and has acted as consultant to many nationally recognised companies such as B&Q Ltd. He is an associate of the Employers Forum on Disability and spoke at our Old Trafford conference in 2001.

There will be a number of workshops presented by Jobcentre Plus, Bury EST, and the Disability Rights Commission and by Philip Friend himself. Full details are available from Fred Bowen at Bury EST or on our website.



## Working Start

Our ESF project, Working Start, is producing some excellent results. Over the last year the project has helped 28 people into full-time employment. It is due to finish at the end of

June this year and we give our congratulations to all those people who have found work as a result. A big thank you to all the staff involved.



## Gamekeeper turned Poacher

We're delighted to welcome Fred Bowen to the team. Fred is leading our work with local employers and will be driving forward the new Employer Forum on Diversity. He will lead on marketing the service to employers and is no stranger to pushing forward policy initiatives in the Bury area. As a prominent local businessman, Fred has a keen understanding of the needs of small and medium sized businesses.

Fred was self-employed until recently and is a familiar face about town. Many of you will have known Fred from the time that he owned the Cornmarket Fish & Chip Bar on Haymarket Street. During his time at the Cornmarket, Fred

provided a number of quality training placements within his business and employed a number of disabled people on a permanent basis until the shop was sold. It could be said that Fred conceived the idea of social firms in Bury almost single-handed! He was also responsible for initiating our Christmas Lights workshop back in 1998.

A local man, Fred was Chair of Bury Chamber of Trade for many years and is currently Chair of the Board of Governors at Bury College. He has featured on many BBC business reports and is well connected with the local commercial and political sectors. We are confident he will give a

big boost to our strategic aims.

We are also pleased to welcome a number of new staff since we produced the last newsletter. Phillip Austin, Maureen Edwards and Sharon Cummins have all been working as Placement Officers on our ESF project, Working Start. Full details of our current staff team can be found at our website by clicking on "About Us".



## Help on Learning and Work

Information and advice sessions for adults looking for help on learning and work are being held at Inwood House by Jude Toner, a Community Adviser. Jude can offer information and advice to people looking for a job or a change of work, or who want to gain new qualifications or take up other learning opportunities. She can help with completing application forms, CV building, job hunting, interview techniques, and letter writing.

The Information and Advice Service offered by Jude is just one part of the services provided

across Bolton and Bury by the local Information Advice and Guidance ('IAG') Partnership. The Partnership is a group of local agencies working together to provide adults with free information, advice and guidance on learning and work. Jude provides a community-based service for the Partnership, working mainly in libraries, jobcentres, and community centres.

For details of when Jude will be at Inwood House, or to find out about the other venues, telephone the IAG Team on 0800 028 5590. You can find more information about the Bolton &

Bury IAG Partnership on their website [www.boltonburyiag.org](http://www.boltonburyiag.org)



# PERMITTED WORK

Along with other concerned agencies, we have been lobbying the Government over the proposed changes to Therapeutic Earnings, now called 'Permitted Work'. We're delighted that they have listened to our concerns and have created a category of supported work (see below). People on Incapacity Benefit have been asked by letter about their involvement in work and can contact us for help with this.

From April 2002 the new arrangements will allow any person claiming benefit, based on incapacity, to try some paid work without the need for prior approval from a doctor. They will still need to tell the office, which pays them benefit, about the work before they start it. Any person will be able to work:

- *for earnings of up to £20.00 a week for an unlimited period, or*
- *in supported work for earnings of up to £66.00 a week for an unlimited period. (For further details see below), or*
- *for less than 16 hours a week, on average, with earnings up to £66.00 a week for a 26 week period. The period can be extended for another 26 weeks if a person is working with a Job Broker, Personal Adviser or Disability Employment Adviser who agrees that it will help towards work of more than 16 hours a week. There will be no limit to the number of times someone can do permitted work in this category during the currency of a claim; but there must be a gap of at least 52 weeks between periods. A Job Broker, Personal Adviser or Disability Employment Adviser must support all subsequent periods of permitted work from the outset.*

No one will have to undergo a medical test just because they are doing permitted work.

People will be able to carry on getting IB or SDA while doing permitted work without it affecting their benefit. People getting Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit will have their benefit reduced if their average earnings are more than a set amount each week.

If you are concerned about these changes or want more information, please contact us!



## Supported Work

There are special arrangements for those disabled people who are being supported in work. People, such as those with learning disabilities, whose condition is unlikely to improve over time will continue to be able to combine indefinitely some work while receiving their incapacity benefits.

Under the new rules people who work in the community with ongoing support or supervision from a professional caseworker (employed or engaged by a public body or voluntary organisation) will not be subject to time limits.

The new category will be called supported work and will include, for example, people who are:

- *on the enhanced Care Programme Approach of the National Service Framework for Mental Health; or*

- *employed by Social Firms via Support centres; or*
- *in touch with a Care Co-ordinator or Employment Development Officer; or*
- *have had a Social Services Assessment.*

This is intended to help those people whose disability means that their work capacity is limited to less than 16 hours a week, but is more than the few hours covered by the £20 per week option. Under the current therapeutic work rules they can do some work indefinitely with their GP's support. These are people with conditions that cannot be cured but may be amenable to control/management by medication/therapy.

This category will also include people who work in a sheltered workshop or as part of a hospital treatment programme.

## Your opinion counts...

Tell us what you think about the changes to Therapeutic Earnings. How has it affected you?

# Joint Investment Plan UPDATE

The Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plans have taken a knock following the Department of Health's letter to Local Authorities that they will not be required to resubmit Joint Investment Plans on an annual basis. The downgrading of the JIPs has led to a number of protests and Bury EST's Huw Davies has written to the Department to seek an explanation. It seems that the Department for Work & Pensions may not have been fully consulted on the decision and we have asked Ivan Lewis MP to investigate.

A speech by Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle MP, at the recent AfSE conference did little to dispel our doubts as she failed to mention the initiative. The JIPs have been seen as a vital means of bringing Health and Education bodies to the planning table and there is widespread fear that they will now reduce their involvement. The JIPs have been very complex and involved many organisations yet it seems that the Department of Health took the decision following a meeting last September between a dozen or so Local Authorities and the Nuffield Institute.

The Nuffield Report has highlighted several themes emerging from the Joint Investment Plans so far:

- *The importance of more effective handling of the transition from education to employment for disabled people, including the issue of transfer of equipment;*
- *The need to work towards greater integration of systems for assessing eligibility for services and a more coordinated approach to managing information;*
- *Ensuring the plan gives full consideration to carers and equal opportunities issues;*
- *Maintaining consultation and improving services for physical/sensory disabilities;*
- *Effective engagement of employers and creating a forum for direct contact between disabled people and employers.*

Our experience of the JIPs has also highlighted a number of needs, including:

- **Better information for clients and employers;**
- **Better co-ordination of local partnerships and;**
- **Improved resourcing of local services.**



Maria Eagle MP

We fail to see how these aims can be progressed if the planning forum is downgraded or even scrapped. The JIP Partnership Board meets on June 7th to consider these issues and it is likely that we will have to prioritise our objectives and link the Plan into other initiatives such as the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Links:

[www.doh.gov.uk/jointunit/jip.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/jointunit/jip.htm)  
[www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities](http://www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities)

## 11 things you didn't know about Bury EST staff

- Dennie used to be a training advisor for Wella Hair Products.
- Rod is addicted to chocolate biscuits.
- Katrina makes wonderful patchwork quilts.
- Tony was at the last football match at which Best, Charlton and Law all scored: Huddersfield Twn. 0 Man Utd. 3 (1972).
- Maureen has a piece of the Cavern wall at home.
- Julie is an expert rower and has been up in a hot air balloon.
- Sharon has sung on a 1993 No.1 hit.
- Phillip was once questioned by police about having a body in the back of his car after someone reported seeing an arm hanging out of the boot – it was his wife holding down the boot lid!
- Mick is well known for playing the whistle in local folk band Da'Mipherry but not many people know he can also play the triangle.
- Before working for Bury EST, Lee worked as a cocktail bar tender in America.
- Lynda has appeared as a 'beach babe' in an episode of Soldier Soldier.

# News in brief...

## 76% OF EMPLOYERS UNAWARE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO EMPLOY DISABLED PEOPLE

3 out of 4 UK employers say they have had no opportunities to employ disabled people, according to research released by jobability.com - a web-based recruitment service for disabled people. Some 76% of the 1,000 survey respondents said, "opportunities to employ disabled people had not yet arisen", with 44% citing the unsuitable nature of the work as the reason.

Of those companies employing disabled people, however, almost two-thirds (64%) said they incurred no extra costs by making reasonable adjustments. And 40% of companies who did incur costs indicated that these were under £1,000. The full report, Employers' Attitudes Towards Employing Disabled People is available to download from the Leonard Cheshire website at: <http://www.leonard-cheshire.org>

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Martin, Thomas, David, Nick, Chris, Philip, Alan and Brian who have all returned to work. Also to Angela and Michael, who have started doing voluntary work.

## SURGERIES

The Information Surgeries are now held at Inwood House, Bury, on Friday mornings between 10-12 noon (no appointment necessary). The different agencies involved include Bury EST, the Employment Service, Housing, Lifetime Careers and the Benefits Agency. Anyone can attend these sessions to obtain confidential advice and information, about issues that are relevant to you or your client. Please contact Katrina Sartini on 0161-253-6588 for further details.

## PERMITTED WORK

From 8th April 2002, Permitted Work will replace therapeutic earnings. All clients should have received written information from the Department for Work and Pensions explaining the new rules. If you are in any doubt about this please contact Bury EST and we will be happy to look at your individual circumstances. Don't forget we have our own drop-in on Tuesday afternoons 1pm-4pm, at Ribchester Drive.

## WAITING TIMES

As we receive so many referrals to our service, it is inevitable that clients have to wait for an appointment to see a member of staff. We are only able to work with a certain number of clients at any one time, and the support needs of each person have to be taken fully into account. However, there may be steps you could be taking whilst you are on our waiting list, e.g. voluntary work or a course to increase your skills. We can advise you about this at our drop-in, so your waiting time can still be productive for you. We appreciate your patience and understanding in this matter. We operate a drop-in for learning disabled clients on Tuesday mornings from 10am to Noon and a mental health drop-in on Tuesday afternoons from 1pm to 4pm.

## SERVICE EVALUATION

Thank you to everyone who completed our service evaluation. 41 questionnaires were sent to clients who had used the service in the last year, and 19 completed forms were returned to us. Your views are very important to us, in order for us to develop the service you want. Copies of the report are available at Bury EST.



## ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Bury EST Manager, Huw Davies, has been elected as Chair of AfSE following

the organisation's Annual General Meeting and conference in Bournemouth on May 9/10th. The conference was extremely well attended and as well as a range of best practice workshops, featured keynote speeches from Ivan Lewis, Minister for Young People & Learning, Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People and Linda Mitchell, Head of Diversity at the BBC. AfSE plays a key role in supporting supported employment agencies across the country and representing their interests with Government.

## THANKS, JULIE

We wish the best of luck to Julie Luxton who has recently left following her placement with us as a social work student. Julie fitted in really well and we're confident she'll make an excellent social worker.

## GEMMA DATABASE

Bury EST has been piloting a new database, GEMMA, that has been developed in Australia by Castle Personnel. The database is designed specifically for the Supported Employment sector and is able to produce highly sophisticated reports and statistical information to aid the completion of grants returns. Castle Personnel have visited us on a number of occasions and we are confident that a few tweaks will see the database being widely used across the country. It is already being used by agencies in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and Ireland.

## ALL CHANGE IN HEALTH

There have been huge changes to Health services in Bury. The Bury Primary Care Trust has taken over the delivery of primary care such as Health Centres and District Nursing. Fairfield Hospital has combined with North Manchester and Birch Hill Hospitals to form the Pennine Acute Trust while mental health services have been taken over by the West Pennine Mental Health Trust. This Trust will be covering the Bury, Rochdale, Tameside and Oldham areas.

## CONNEXIONS

The Connexions service becomes operational in Greater Manchester later this year. The service will work with all 16 to 19 year old school leavers to help them settle into adult lifestyles. It has a particular emphasis on addressing socially excluded groups and will provide a service to disabled people until they reach the age of 25. Huw Davies has joined the Partnership Board of the Bury Connexions Partnership. We will bring you a feature on this initiative in a future newsletter.

Links: [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk)

## A reminder of our current staff:

**Huw Davies** *Manager*  
**Lynda Smethurst** *Best Value Officer*  
**Trish Hilton** *Clerical Officer*

### Mental Health Service

Phillip Austin *Placement Officer*  
Fred Bowen *Placement Officer*  
Maureen Edwards *Placement Officer*  
Rod Goodwin *Employment Officer*  
Tony Henson *Placement Officer*  
Katrina Sartini *Employment Officer*

### Learning Disability Service

Anne Clarke *Placement Officer*  
Sharon Cummins *Placement Officer*  
Mick Dean *Placement Officer*  
Dennie Ford *Placement Officer*  
Lee Salad *Employment Officer*



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