

## A year in the life of North West City Jobs

The timing of the closing celebrations for SRB6 is perfect as it is nearly one year to the day that North West City Jobs started. In that time, in spite of having to spend the first three months recruiting staff and establishing an operational base, we are able to report real progress.

Our Business Liaison Team has engaged with over 50 businesses. These include the Police; LIDL and Asda supermarkets; Subway outlets citywide; IndiVeg; Star City Casino; Birmingham City Council Corporate Recruitment; retailers in the Bullring including 'Best Seller and Fiorelli' and most recently, Wickes DIY chain.

## Community engagement

North West City Jobs has organised a number of local jobs fairs and they have all been held in the heart of the community. This is important to us as it offers local people real access to local jobs in a familiar setting. Venues have included:

- Matthew Boulton Primary School
- NCH (Winson Green)
- Handsworth Association of Community Help
- Summerfield Community Centre
- Cherry Tree Surestart Centre
- Anglesey Primary School

We have also assisted with the delivery of a number of recruitment events such as the BRMB Jobs Fair at the Repertory Theatre, Aston Pride's jobs event at the Aston Villa Football Club and HP Foods Limited.



**Through local jobs fairs, NWCJ has raised its profile in the local community and has been able to reach over 300 local residents, providing a hands-on job matching service**

Through these jobs fairs the project has been able to attract over 300 people and offer them information, advice and guidance on training and employment opportunities. These events are delivered in partnership with a range of key agencies — Jobcentre Plus, Pertemps and the Learning and Skills Council, so that real solutions to the barriers to employment can be tackled.

## Working with community & voluntary groups

The project is working closely with the community and voluntary sector to ensure we access and work with residents from all ethnic minority communities, and this has been reflected in the take-up of services. Strong links have been forged with many organisations, including the African Caribbean Millennium Centre, Community Roots Enterprise Centre, the UK Asian

Women's Centre and the Nishkam Centre — and many of the training courses have been held at their venues to attract local residents.

The Community Involvement & Training Co-ordinator is also working closely with grassroots groups, many of which represent disadvantaged and isolated communities that otherwise suffer social exclusion. Examples additional to those already mentioned include Indigo, BEST and Lozells Recreation Group.

## Access to courses

NWCJ has made a significant impact on many fronts. The project has supported over 100 people to access customised training courses (with accredited qualifications — and many get 2 or 3) and so far over 50 SRB6 residents have gone into full-time employment. The project has been able to improve the confidence level of local residents, increased career aspirations and motivation to work. This project is a positive vehicle to support people into work and ensure local residents have first-hand opportunities into accessing local vacancies.

*One out of every three people we engaged with went on to training.*

*One out of every two people trained secured a real job*



*"I was desperately looking for work and North West City Jobs were wonderful. In no time at all, I was placed in a real job that I enjoy."*

**Mohammed Usman**  
New employee at Birmingham Enterprise Ltd



**Merisha Stevenson, New Style Radio broadcaster at the Afro-Caribbean Millennium Centre, helped spread the good word in a 20 minute interview with NWCJ officers**

## Engaging with local businesses

NWCJ is very much business-facing. A positive relationship has been established with local traders and businesses in the SRB6 area and a comprehensive package of advice, guidance and support is offered to local employers.

Businesses are able to access recruitment support which includes advertising the vacancy, sifting clients, job preparation (interview skills, telephone interviews) and local venues to hold interviews. The employer is then able to select the best candidate for the job. To date the project has excellent feedback from employers such as Subway (who were so delighted with the quality of candidates offered, they took on 18 staff in one go, when the requirement was originally for 15).

## Pro-active customised training courses

We set out to offer training opportunities to 135 SRB6 residents by the end of March 2007. With in excess of 120 already trained, most achieving accredited qualifications, and with a further 3 fully subscribed courses on the go, we hope the figures speak for themselves. We are focussing our training efforts on getting people into areas



*"Fantastic. North West City Jobs has delivered just the right level of new employees. This has been a very happy arrangement that has saved us from some real headaches."*

**Bimla Devi**  
Managing Director, IndiVeg

of employment that are growing in the city, including:

- Leisure, Fitness and Health Sectors
- Warehouse and Logistics
- Security
- Customer Service and Retail

Examples of customised training courses delivered within the community have included:

- **Birmingham Ex-Offenders Service Team**  
13 beneficiaries; all completing training and achieving accredited qualifications.
- **Cherry Tree Surestart Centre, Lozells**  
12 beneficiaries; all completing training and achieving accredited qualifications.
- **Crossmatch Solutions**  
23 beneficiaries being awarded 2 accredited qualifications each, with interviews lined up in logistics and warehousing jobs.

Campaigns leading to employment have included:

- **LiDL (Supermarket)**  
2 customised training courses for 28 beneficiaries; all completed training and achieved qualifications in Customer Service 'Welcome Host' level 2, Health & Safety, and Food Hygiene. Also a 'soft skills' course was developed to enable candidates to become 'job ready'.
- **Subway**  
2 customised training courses for 15 beneficiaries; all completed training and achieved accredited qualifications as above.
- **Wickes**  
23 local people gaining employment, 13 from the SRB6 area.



*"The quality of candidates has been very high and we have been able to make some very successful placements – and that includes difficult to fill posts. North West City Jobs achieved a realistic expectation level."*

**Jayne McCracken,**  
Principal Recruitment Officer (Positive Action Team), Birmingham City Council

... we can find the diamonds under your feet



## Summing up

“There are a number of really exciting initiatives bringing together employers and potential recruits from areas of high unemployment within the city,” explains Waheed Nazir, Assistant Director — Development Planning and Regeneration, Birmingham City Council. “The name describes the geography and our biggest single task will be to fuel a new employment hub located at the old IMI Witton Headquarters, a 90 acre prime development site that could eventually provide 2,000 new jobs. That’s one end of the scale. We are also here to help bring forward jobs at other key sites as well as helping local small and medium sized businesses and new entrepreneurs. That’s where we have been proving our approach. Early projects have been very warmly welcomed by local businesses and have trained up and employed local people who may not have been in employment for years. The smiles say it all.”

Oliver Humpidge, Business Liaison Officer adds his perspective: “What employers want is a fully screened process, so we do all the sifting to ensure we have a group of suitable candidates. Then, before the employer ever sees them, we put them through a one to three week customised training programme. It is developed specifically for the potential jobs — so far, ranging anything from the leisure industry to the health service. At the end of the day the employer knows that they will have a pool of really motivated, job-ready people to interview.”

Kyle Stott, Community Involvement & Training Co-ordinator, feels just as strongly. “It’s not just the potential impact on businesses — the cost savings, the reduced hassle and so on — the crux is really about helping unemployed people from one of the highest areas of unemployment in the country and coming up with the first practical solution where everyone wins. We deliver in community

settings where local people feel comfortable, are well informed and better matched to good jobs.”

## The good news. Our commitment to you . . .

The work that has been delivered by the team throughout the SRB6 area will carry on in 2007/08. We will continue to bring information on real job opportunities into the community and deliver job-focussed customised training at local venues wherever possible. This means working in Handsworth Wood, Lozells and East Handsworth, Soho, Ladywood and Aston Wards as a priority, and ensuring local people get the chance to compete for the new jobs coming into North West Birmingham.

Our message to employers is that there are diamonds, right here, under their feet . . .

... we can find the  
*diamonds under your feet*