

TITLE:

Sheffield partnership tackles crime and training

DATE:

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SUMMARY

An imaginative partnership in Sheffield delivers vital training and work experience for young people not in education, employment or training, provides a value-for-money service for the local social housing provider and has contributed to a reduction in crime figures through using the young people to make improvements to housing.

INSTITUTION PROFILE

Private Limited Company

85 Employees

Three sites in South Yorkshire

EAUC COMMENT

This case study provides a very useful example of how a partnership can achieve a great deal for young people educationally, and also for the community as a whole.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Community Training Services Ltd (CTS Ltd)
Sheffield Homes
Connexions (via Sheffield Futures)
Sheffield Youth Offending Team

Kier Sheffield LLP
South Yorkshire Police Service
Sheffield City Council

THE PROBLEM

Community Training Services Ltd (CTS) was set up in 1999 to respond to the growing need of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the long term unemployed in Sheffield, and to deliver skills and employment activity to help these people back into the labour market.

A new approach to supporting young people NEET was needed as traditional solutions had, at best, only a 50 per cent success rate. This meant that more than half of the young people who started the courses did not go on to gain qualifications, to join other courses, to find employment or training.

Sheffield Homes, the provider of social housing in the city, needed an inexpensive and reliable way of carrying out the maintenance on its properties. South Yorkshire Police were also looking for a way to reduce burglaries and knew that initiatives to make properties more 'burglar-proof' had paid dividends in other areas.

The organisations had been working together in a small-scale way before 1999 when it was decided to formalise a partnership to tackle these multiple problems, which would result in young people gaining important work skills as well as qualifications. Community Training Services was the umbrella company formed to deliver the solution.

THE APPROACH

The initial approach was funding driven – the scheme needed to meet criteria so it could easily access funding. Creating CTS as a legal entity allowed access to funding from European Social Funds (ESF Objective 1) and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB6). The programme is now supported by Entry 2 Employment (e2e) funding, ensuring it has long-term security.

The three main partners – CTS Training, Kier Sheffield LLP and Sheffield Homes - entered into Service Level Agreements and formed a Steering Group with terms of reference, so all partners had clearly defined roles and responsibilities to make the partnership a success.

The programme was initially funded through short-term ESF and SRB funds, but, to ensure its longevity, it was altered to provide NVQ qualifications which ensured it fitted with mainstream Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding criteria. The young people are recruited to a programme which carries out maintenance on social housing, along with working on gardens and improvements

to homes which would deter burglars. The LSC also provides additional financial support in the form of Education Maintenance Allowance for the young people.

CTS Ltd deals with the administration of the programme and all aspects of funding as well as recruiting young people and taking responsibility for their achievements, both in terms of formal qualifications and plans for their career progress.

Kier Sheffield LLP, a partnership between the construction company Kier Group and Sheffield Council set up to provide the maintenance to council housing, provides supervisors for the work, which can include painting, decorating, rubbish removal, gardening, environmental work, burglary reduction initiatives and fitting smoke alarms. The supervisors are also trained mentors. This aspect of the programme teaches young people the valuable skills they need for both the workplace and the community.

South Yorkshire Police and Sheffield Homes provide details of the necessary work and the areas or properties to be targeted. Young people are referred to the project from Connexions, the advice service for 13-19 years olds, and the local Youth Offending Services.

In addition to the practical work, the young people are also offered traditional courses by CTS in literacy and numeracy.

GOALS

- An increase on the achievements of 'traditional' programmes for disaffected young people, which have limited success in the learners progressing into education, work or training
- Forge effective partnerships so the work of the young people benefits the people of Sheffield as a whole
- Provide a value-for-money service to Sheffield Homes and South Yorkshire Police for the delivery of improvements to people's homes
- A reduction in antisocial behaviour, by engaging the young people who were causing many of the issues
- Provide practical hands-on experiences for young people, many of whom rebelled against more traditional education and training
- Reduce the number of young people who are NEET
- Improve the local environment and make Sheffield 'Cleaner, Greener and Safer' – a Sheffield City Council initiative

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Obstacle

- Setting up a successful partnership – initially there were suspicions about 'hidden agendas' and barriers to be overcome about public and private sector partnerships
- Securing funding to set up the initiative
- Continuation of funding - the initial funding streams (ESF and SRB) had a three year term
- Day to day social issues of learners
- Recruitment of learners on introduction of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), reducing their income to maximum of £30 per week for full time hours and causing a fall in learner numbers

Solution

- To set out each partner's agenda early in discussions. Each partner wrote a specification detailing what was in it for them and everything was openly discussed and agreed. This was essential to set the foundations for a lasting partnership
- Creating CTS as a company allowed access to ESF and SRB funding pots. Perseverance and belief is key in securing funding in the early days
- Develop the programme so it meets mainstream funding criteria such as Entry to Employment (e2e.) Additional long-term funding can be accessed through the 'Progression Pathways' criteria under the LSC's Foundation Learning Tier
- Train everyone who has contact with the young people as mentors - this is essential so everyone has an understanding of the issues learners are up against, and how to handle certain situations
- Access expertise in pastoral care from external organisations to tackle specific issues such as housing, drugs, debt, alcohol misuse, abuse, sexual health and anger management
- Develop a part time employment option, giving learners the opportunity to earn an additional £30 per week working on the programme, and still working within EMA guidance
- Numbers on the programme increased again significantly when CTS introduced this

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

- 67 per cent of young people attending the programme progressed into work, education or training during 2006/07 and 2007/08
- One area saw a drop in repeat burglaries from 38 per cent to four per cent following the young people's work to deter burglaries
- The young people contributed to the clean up in the city following the devastating floods in the summer of 2007
- Anti-social behaviour on troubled wards has been steadily reduced since the introduction of this approach in 1999
- Over 1,700 gardens of the elderly and disabled maintained each year
- Over 1,000 painting projects completed each year
- Over 1,500 environmental projects completed each year

LESSONS LEARNT

- The partnership is key – trust and openness between partners are the cornerstones of success. Get this right at the start and you will have a good foundation to work from
- Persevere when applying for funding – spend time understanding the priorities of funding bodies and have belief in your project
- Carefully look through the funding guidance to ensure you can exploit any loopholes – such as the part-time work option which enabled the young people to earn more than the £30 EMA and made the programme more attractive

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Kier Sheffield LLP www.kiersheffield.co.uk

Sheffield Homes www.sheffieldhomes.org.uk

South Yorkshire Police www.southyorks.police.uk

Sheffield Futures www.sheffieldfutures.org.uk

Sheffield City Council www.sheffield.gov.uk

Sheffield Youth Offending Service www.sheffield-yos.org.uk

Education Maintenance Allowance <http://ema.direct.gov.uk/>

Sheffield City Stewardship programme <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/council-meetings/scrutiny/successfulneighbourhoods/agenda-15th-march-2007/city-stewardship-scheme>



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