

**Full Employment Areas Initiative
Mid Term Progress Review**

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Full Employment Areas Initiative (FEAI) remains at the forefront of UK welfare to work programmes, in that it has adopted a community development process which is focused on engaging local residents in the target areas in developing their employability. This goes some way beyond the typical approach of using outreach more as a marketing function alongside leaflets, and other forms of advertising, and includes working with local groups to build trust and establish a basis for a more extended conversation concerning employability.
2. It is not FEAI's role to secure employment or other outcomes for their clients, directly. An animator's primary contribution is to understand clients' needs, identify suitable support among partner organisations and, crucially, build up their confidence and motivation so that they are able to participate.
3. The Full Employment Areas Initiative (FEAI), was established in April 2002 with funding from Glasgow City Council and European Social Fund to work in three areas in Glasgow, Wellhouse (Greater Easterhouse), Roystonhill (Glasgow North) and Rosehill (Greater Pollok). These areas were selected on the basis of data on benefit payments, unemployment and economic inactivity. Phase 2 of the programme commenced in January 2005. During this phase the FEAI continued to work in Wellhouse, Roystonhill and Rosehill. In addition, the project moved into the neighbouring areas of Arden, Barlanark and Rosemount, Balmore and Hamiltonhill.
4. The core objectives of the programme were to understand the process of moving the harder to reach into economic activity; to practically demonstrate what is required in order to reach the hidden unemployed and assist them into jobs; to show how mainstream service delivery may have to change in order to engage and help non-JSA groups secure and sustain employment; and to measure the added value of 'full employment' in an area.
5. Cambridge Policy Consultants were asked by CEiS, who manage the FEAI, to undertake a mid term progress review of the Initiative 18 months into the 3 years of Phase 2. The overall aim of the evaluation is to gauge progress for far and what further needs to be done. This evaluation has three core foci:
 - **To review the impact of the initiative** against its main targets, its sustainability and the extent of penetration of the hidden unemployed and the harder to reach who would not otherwise have been helped.
 - **To measure the effectiveness** of the animator engagement process and the linkages with referral agencies.
 - **To evaluate how far the project has travelled to date**, what lessons have been learned, what still needs to be done and how the learning can be passed on.

The FEAI Process

6. A total of just over 2,000 clients have been contacted by the programme over the period April 2002 to November 2006. By the end of December 2004 (phase 1), 1,402 clients had been contacted, 38 percent of which (385) were carried forward into phase 2.
7. FEAI has been very successful in gaining trust of the local communities in which it operates. This is evidenced by the high proportion of clients in the 'old' FEAI areas introduced to the initiative through word of mouth either by recommendations by friends and relatives, or through other support agencies working in the area.
8. Trust remains an essential ingredient of this approach. The animators are recognised as people who do not work for the key agencies, who are prepared to advocate on behalf of the client and who are non-judgemental. In addition, FEAI is able to devote more time to people than most delivery organisations. In effect, they are able to customise the time they commit and the package of support services they facilitate to the needs of each client.
9. Client feedback is overwhelmingly positive and around three quarters of those interviewed felt that they would not have got the same help from another agency, either because they did not feel able to access other services or had limited knowledge of what they would offer. The main reasons given by the clients which set the FEAI apart from other local agencies was the 'door to door service', their friendliness and the non judgemental nature and the general lack of pressure put on the client.
10. A difficult issue for the FEAI is how to effectively disengage with clients. Of the 385 clients that had been carried forward from Phase 1, over half had over 10 contacts with an animator. In the last 6 months, 40 percent of those engaged with were existing clients. From discussions with the animators it is evident that there is a trade off between working with the current stock of clients and getting new clients in.
11. FEAI has found the expansion in capacity of the operating areas a challenge which has absorbed management time and attention. The performance of FEAI did dip as the new areas came on board, but there are signs that a corner has been turned and the animator teams are now firmly established in all areas.

Relationships with referral agencies

12. During Phase 2 of the initiative, FEAI has sought to build stronger relationships with other support agencies to help ensure that FEAI clients are securely engaged in an appropriate service and disseminate good practice methods they have developed in engaging and working with their target client groups. Nearly one in ten clients have been referred to FEAI by partner agencies and just over 40% of clients are referred on to another support agency.
13. Feedback from referral agencies suggest the initiative has been very successful in reaching those people in the community that are typically beyond the reach of mainstream service provision. Almost all referral agencies interviewed said that FEAI clients were usually on the edge of their 'normal' client group and required them to 'stretch' their service provision to cope with their higher level of needs.

14. Those referral organisations who received a significant number of referrals from FEAI consistently reported appropriate and well-briefed clients turning up to their services – FEAI is seen as being ‘fair’ and ‘independent’ in judging where a client should be referred to – something which is increasingly important in an environment where funding follows the client.
15. Most referral agencies recognise the time it takes to prepare clients and the level of preparation that FEAI animators do with clients prior to referral. There appears to be a continuing need for the FEAI service given that many clients will not engage proactively and need to be sourced and persuaded to enter an employability process and that many of the clients with which FEAI engages require more time and more persistence to progress their employability. Many referral agencies, including LDCs, recognise that this can be a time-consuming exercise and they themselves do not currently have the resources to achieve this. The FEAI fills an important gap in service delivery which could only be filled by agencies if they devoted similar resources to the problem.
16. The extent to which FEAI has been successful in changing partners service delivery is somewhat mixed although as a consequence of linking and working with FEAI, some referral organisations state they have reviewed some of their processes and procedures. More time probably needs to be invested in building up relationships with referral agencies. Relationship building needs to be face to face, to occur on a relatively regular basis and to be updated from time to time as faces change. The Equal Access frontline worker meetings do focus on this issue and provide a platform to spread FEAI expertise to a wide range of service agency practice.

Client Engagement

17. Around three quarters of those interviewed felt that they would not have got the same help from another agency, either because they did not feel able to access other services or had limited knowledge of what they would offer. The main reasons given by the clients which set the FEAI apart from other local agencies was the ‘door to door service’, their friendliness and the non judgemental nature and the general lack of pressure put on the client.
18. The FEAI style engages with local people by ‘speaking their own language’ and avoiding form filling and many of the procedures people have had poor experience of in the past. This is not so much what is said but the way it is said (for example, FEAI still have to complete ESF forms to claim funding; it is just not done as a bureaucratic process with the client).
19. FEA’s approach to outreach is justified in that knocking on doors does engage more clients from disadvantaged groups than arise through other contact methods.
20. Around 60% of those contacted on the doorstep and the street do not engage. Analysis of the reasons for non-engagement is not easy with the available information and more needs to be done to explore whether clients are ‘slipping the net’. A current best guess suggests that around 40-45% are either already in work or pensioners. Many of the remainder have caring responsibilities or health barriers but not all provide a reason. This will help provide a basis for judging an exit strategy for each area.

21. Those that do engage are predominately core target group (working age) and most work with FEA over an extended period (7% met with FEA animators just once compared to an average of over 7 meetings).
22. Organisations receiving clients referred from FEAI report that the vast majority of these clients are additional – that they themselves do not normally engage with such clients. The FEAI plays an important role as a handholding and signposting agency to other stakeholders in the area.

Client Outcomes

23. The primary outcome for FEAI clients is a move into employment. Some 20% of those engaged with FEAI have moved into work. This includes full-time and part-time jobs but not temporary placements which account for a further 1% of clients. This increases to 22% if those clients who met only once with their animator or are not of working age are removed. Including all those contacted (2,901), FEAI delivers 8% into work – around 1 in 12 people contacted.
24. We suspect that there is a degree of under-recording in FEAI data as 42% of survey respondents stated that they had been in employment and yet the FEAI database reports employment outcomes for these same clients at 27%. If this result were representative across all FEAI clients, then the 234 job outcomes would suggest that FEAI has placed approximately 360 clients into employment. Unfortunately, we cannot confirm that this is the case. A degree of under-recording is probably inevitable to an extent given the nature of the client group and wide range of data required – maintaining such a dataset, even on a periodic basis is a major undertaking.
25. Some 12% of FEA clients moved into some form of training or education. Other outcomes were relatively infrequent: 2% undertook some form of personal development, 1% voluntary activity and 2% joined an Intermediate Labour Market programme.
26. Those who were introduced by friends or family are more likely to enter work (34%) as are those who were met on the street (31%). The latter does appear counter-intuitive, but may simply reflect the fact that many of those who refused to undertake the survey or engage were also met on the street and so this group are in fact a core who are interested in work and are able to benefit from FEAI support.
27. Those engaged by door-knocking are least likely to enter employment (12%) and training/educational opportunities (9%). This group have been identified above as containing higher proportions of very disadvantaged clients.
28. Employment outcomes from FEAI are comparable to similar programmes although in many cases FEAI is targeted on a more disadvantaged clients group. The cost of each employment outcome is estimated to be £4,180.
29. The sustainability of employment is good in comparison to similar schemes, especially in the light of referral organisations' views on the higher level of barriers faced by FEAI clients. Around a quarter of clients with employment outcomes ended their employment prematurely. The other three quarters were still in employment at the time of their last meeting with the FEAI.

30. The MIS data provide few clues as to what makes a successful transition into referral organisation and then on into employment or training for clients – the boost to an individual’s confidence and awareness is difficult to capture in simple monitoring data. Work is already underway to capture the key elements of clients’ ‘stories’ in a way which can be analysed across the programme and this may help provide further insight into the details of FEAI’s added value.
31. Key issues which do stand out in the data include:
- Clients with fewer barriers are more likely to have a positive outcome after working with FEAI: under 50s, with some qualifications, some form of employment in the last 5 years, and not claiming Disability benefits are more likely to enter employment and education/training outcomes.
 - Lone parent outcomes are good, particularly in terms of educational and training outcomes alongside employment – just 42% of lone parents do not have an outcome compared to 61% of clients as whole.
 - FEA outcomes compare well to similar initiatives elsewhere. Higher outcomes have been secured in other programmes where the focus is not as tightly drawn on deprived areas and where we suspect FEAI would compare well on a life-for-like basis.
 - A key rider here is that while FEAI has moved a long way down the road of engaging clients, there is more work to be done in exploring approaches which can change clients’ views on moving back to work. This is an issue which also confronts national programmes. FEAI clients do engage for an extended period but performance in relation to eventual job entries needs to be enhanced to make a more significant contribution to the targets for Workforce Plus and Cities Strategy.
 - Too little is known about why the majority of clients fail to move into work – severe client needs, lack of affordable childcare, particular personal circumstance are issues for many but, at present, it is not possible to determine where FEAI has made a difference. The survey results suggest that clients are split evenly between those who could not have got into work without FEAI support and those who think it made no difference.
32. We suggest that FEAI introduce an initial assessment of a client’s employability attitude and prospects: a recent review of ESF services for inactive clients¹ suggested a categorisation of inactive clients into: those for whom work is an immediate priority, those for whom work is an option sometime in the future, those for whom work is not an option in the foreseeable future and those for whom work is not a consideration at any time in the future. These should set broad flags on what progression may mean for individual clients and provide some insight on the added value of the process.

¹ Taylor and O’Connor, European Social Fund: A profile of ‘inactive’ beneficiaries, DWP Research Report 254, July 2005.

Recommendations for Future Delivery

33. Both Workforce Plus and DWP City Strategy for Glasgow set very stretching targets in terms of a net reduction in the number of working age people on DWP Out of Work Benefits. In order to achieve these targets, a substantial increase in engagement with jobless people is required. To date, the mainstream agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, and even more community-based organisations such as Glasgow's local development company network, have failed to make significant in-roads into the IB client group where most of Glasgow's jobless sit. The FEAI model is therefore critical to the successful delivery of Workforce Plus and DWP City Strategy in the city.
34. In comparison to resourcing a wide range of existing organisations to improve their 'reach', the FEAI model provides a more cost effective way to reach out to the jobless community. FEAI has been able to develop highly specialised frontline skills and has a wealth of knowledge on the issues involved in managing and delivering a service right out on the frontline. Many stakeholders suggested that FEAI would have to be invented if did not exist – for most referral organisations they would have to set up something to a similar format – albeit this would be relatively expensive and inefficient for each to do independently. ***The funders should continue to support the FEAI approach.***
35. A range of alternative delivery mechanisms for the FEAI were appraised to identify the pros and cons of each potential host. ***In appraising the options for the future delivery of the FEAI, the LDC network seems to be the best potential host given the experience, geographical coverage, client group eligibility and non-official face which help it to engage with harder to reach clients.*** However, the LDCs need to develop and maintain strong operational partnerships with housing associations, health and social care organisations and other employability agencies to deliver the FEA approach effectively.
36. CEiS has managed the development of the FEAI and in the process has codified in great detail the key elements of the approach. ***CEiS should be invited to facilitate the transfer of the FEA approach to the new host organisations. This should be done in a compact timescale to create the momentum required to build up the service.***
37. The FEAI service in transferring to new hosts should remain focused on small neighbourhoods with very high concentrations of long-term unemployed and inter-generational unemployment. This should be done for a fixed period of years before moving to other similar areas. The funders need to build this into the delivery specification. ***More generally, the funders need to take responsibility for measuring and managing the performance of the FEA service alongside their other employability interventions, and should do this through the vehicle of the Partnership Funders Group for the city.***