

**DfES Guidance Pilot**

**Community Outreach: A Guidance Service for Adults in  
Herefordshire and Worcestershire**

**Final Project Report**

**April 2003**

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## **THE BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

### **THE CONTEXT: Herefordshire and Worcestershire**

#### **The Area:**

The counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire form a particularly diverse area covering 391,703 hectares (1,512 square miles). From the rural West to the urban North East, it is predominantly a region of small towns and rural villages with the major settlements at Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Hereford, Kidderminster, Ledbury, Leominster, Redditch, Ross-on-Wye and Worcester. (A map appears at Annex 1.)

The two Counties have many links and, until Local Government Reorganisation in 1998, were part of a single authority. There is thus a significant history of joint working across the area which supported both the original development of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire IAG Partnership and the implementation of the Guidance Pilot.

#### **The Population:**

The latest population figures (National Census 2001) show a total of 716,951 across the area with 174,844 (24%) in Herefordshire and 542,107 (76%) in Worcestershire. (A breakdown of these figures by age band appears at Annex 2.) Although this total has risen over the 1991 Census – largely as a result of inward migration – overall the two counties have a low population density including areas with some of the lowest concentrations in England. The age structure differs from that of the UK as a whole with more residents aged 50 and over and fewer in the 15–35 age bands. The 20–29 band is particularly under represented as young people enter HE or take up employment elsewhere.

Compared with the UK and the West Midlands, Worcestershire has only a small number of its population in ethnic minority groups with Redditch having the highest level at 5% and Worcester having 3.5%. Herefordshire does not have an ethnically diverse population.

#### **Employment:**

At the sub-county levels, there are considerable differences between the local employment profiles. In terms of overall numbers, the most important employment

sectors in Worcestershire are: distribution; hotels and catering; banking, finance and business services; public administration, health and education; and manufacturing. In Herefordshire, they are: manufacturing; wholesale and retail; agriculture; and health and social work. A particular characteristic of the area is the high percentage of micro businesses (up to 95% in some parts) with many having 4 or fewer employees.

Although the unemployment numbers are below the UK average, there are areas of high unemployment – frequently with no designated status – and pockets of rural and urban deprivation. As both the numbers engaged in agricultural employment and average farm incomes continue to decline, there is an urgent need to diversify those rural economies and to overcome the reliance by many individuals on traditional skills.

GDP is below the national level and average earnings are below both the national and the regional levels. Most of Herefordshire has been designated as an Objective 2 area in recognition of its particular problems.

## **THE HEREFORDSHIRE & WORCESTERSHIRE IAG PARTNERSHIP**

### **The Origins:**

The Adult Guidance Pilot has been delivered by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire IAG Partnership which was launched in September 1999 following a successful application under the DfEE's "Local Information, Advice and Guidance" Initiative. The DfES issued its invitation to apply for funding to support the Adult Guidance Pilots in 2001. During its lifetime, the Partnership has:

- Established strong links with a wide range of local organisations.
- Set up 40 Information Points hosted by statutory, voluntary and community organisations across the two counties.
- Delivered advisory interviews to target (including for priority and key priority groups) doubling the number in the second year of delivery when compared to the first year and achieving its targets in the third year.
- Begun working with employers (including providing redundancy counselling) in support of the workforce development agenda.
- Put in place a comprehensive management structure with wide sector representation.

- Established a Practitioner Group and a Quality Group.
- Implemented a wide-ranging staff development programme.
- Supported the majority of delivery partners in gaining GAB accreditation.

Over its first two years of operation, the IAG Partnership had become aware that, although their advice and information services met the needs of many clients, there were large numbers for whom one relatively short interaction was insufficient. These clients needed in-depth help to raise their awareness of what was available and included many in the local priority groups who frequently required access to a number of services to allow them to explore their options fully. The Partnership had already identified an unmet demand for guidance interviews estimated at 1,000 per annum but had no means of responding without access to external funding. The timing of the Adult Guidance initiative was therefore impeccable.

### **Developing The Pilot:**

Having already recognised an unmet need for adult guidance, the IAG Partnership identified a number of key concerns and principles which arose from the particular characteristic of the area and its needs. These included:

- The importance of developing a seamless and inclusive local service embracing information, advice **and** guidance. The existing services could thus be augmented to provide more specialist help for clients.
- The need to take assistance into isolated rural areas where poor public transport creates a dependence on local opportunities – for example, 75% of communities in the rural west have no daily service.
- The importance of overcoming the barriers inherent in many traditional institutions by providing guidance within communities and at non-traditional venues.
- The fact that the area had the fourth largest number of disabled people compared with the rest of the West Midlands. This required a specialist to work with clients with disabilities, learning difficulties and basic skills needs with the aim of increasing the numbers gaining qualifications and employment.

- The need to test any available ICT as an innovative vehicle to ensure that no member of the community is denied access to opportunity by reason of rural or social isolation.
- The importance of continuing the networking activity already carried out by the Partnership – including the strengthening of links with voluntary and community organisations – in order both to encourage ownership by local communities and to ensure sustainability.

Although a working group was established to oversee the preparation of the project bid, the tight timescale for its submission restricted the role that group was able to perform. In practice, the guiding principles which had been identified were therefore immensely beneficial to the project's conception. As staffing costs were always likely to be the major item of expenditure, the maximum contract value identified by the DfES in their guidelines also inevitably shaped the project bid by determining the number of FTE posts which could be afforded.

### **Designing The Pilot:**

The geography of Herefordshire and Worcestershire made it necessary to define specific “territories” in order to make individual Guidance Worker caseloads manageable and thus to contain the need for excessive staff travel. This resulted in the division of the area into three parts – Herefordshire, North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire. As the likely budget would cover four posts, this three-way division also allowed the proposal to meet the need which had been identified for a guidance worker who could specialise in supporting clients with disabilities, learning difficulties and basic skills needs.

The project therefore specifically targeted:

- People in remote rural areas
- People in areas of multiple deprivation
- People with disabilities and learning difficulties
- People with low skills and basic skills needs

and grew naturally from those needs which had been identified through the Partnership's mainstream IAG work. It built on the services of existing information points and advice providers by providing access to additional resources which could simply never have been found outside the DfES's funding programme.

### **Innovative Approaches:**

In searching for possible ICT solutions to the issue of rural isolation, the project team examined some development work which had been done on a past project operating from Herefordshire College of Technology. “Ruralnet” was funded under the European ADAPT programme and had piloted the use of videoconferencing as a training method – including the provision of videoconference tutorials. This use of a combination of new technologies and learning approaches to overcome the barriers created by conventional delivery methods appeared to offer a chance to explore the value of this innovative technique in a different context – the guidance interview. As there is a strong probability that it will always be both impractical and uneconomic to offer a full professional service to all the communities served by the project, piloting the use of videoconferenced guidance interviews would allow an evaluation of the barriers and potential benefits of this kind of delivery. If perfected, such technology could support guidance in very remote areas where it would otherwise be unrealistic to provide a service.

From its inception, the IAG Partnership had enlisted the collaboration and support of the community and voluntary sector. It was therefore a natural progression during the design of the pilot to look to explore new ways of delivering outreach in rural and semi-rural areas by fostering community involvement and by engaging the voluntary sector to enable and broker activity.

### **The Proposed Outcomes:**

Most immediately, this proposal was designed to deliver support to approximately 1,000 clients over the life of the project. Given the identified volume of unmet need for guidance, this was of immense value to the members of the IAG Partnership who had no other funding available to carry out this activity. By taking this work forward, it was hoped that the pilot would also:

- Provide vital Management Information on client age, gender, priority group, ethnicity, qualifications, learning/employment status, and referral method.
- Support client tracking to monitor individual outcomes and to measure the overall impact.
- Expand and strengthen the referral network.

- Establish the Partnership's ability to provide a comprehensive IAG service and identify future development needs.
- Strengthen the links with the voluntary and community sector.
- Allow an evaluation of the impact of the innovative aspects of the activity.

There are dangers inherent in creating network activities – and in raising client expectations – when those activities are supported by irregular external funding. This proposal always recognised those dangers but the Partnership believed that, on balance, the pilot achievements would outweigh any risks.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

### **IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSAL**

The nature of this proposal – essentially an extension of activity to meet an identified need for guidance within an existing partnership – convinced the partners that starting up would be relatively straightforward and, in particular, that qualified staff would be available from within that Partnership. It was also envisaged that the bid's proposal to pilot the use of videoconferencing would benefit significantly from the earlier experiences at Herefordshire College of Technology. The reality proved to be very different!

#### **Project Personnel:**

Unfortunately, the project's implementation phase coincided with the introduction of Connexions (Herefordshire and Worcestershire). Staff from the former Hereford and Worcester Careers Service Company were therefore understandably unwilling to apply for posts (even on a secondment basis) which were dependent on short-term external funding at a time when the staffing structure of the new service was being established – the risks to their individual career prospects were simply too great. Given this intense competition for qualified staff, recruitment rapidly became the major obstacle to success.

The initial attempt to recruit appropriately qualified staff from within the IAG Partnership resulted in one FTE post of Guidance Worker for the Herefordshire area being filled by three members of staff from Herefordshire College of Technology. Subsequent attempts met with no further response and a series of local and national advertisements were largely unsuccessful. As the days passed, this situation was exacerbated by the ever-shortening contract period the pilot was able to offer. The national shortage of qualified guidance personnel is, of course, well documented and was further aggravated by the fact that the successful pilots were largely all competing for staff in the same arena.

For such an important project, the Partnership opposed the notion of compromising the recruitment criteria set for staff and an additional two Guidance Workers were eventually appointed – one for North Worcestershire from April 2002 and one for

Special Needs from July 2002. It was therefore accepted that, given the March 2003 deadline, the post for South Worcestershire would have to be dropped from the delivery plan and the project budget and outputs adjusted proportionally.

The post of Project Administration and Tracking Assistant was advertised locally and successfully filled from April 2002.

Despite the initial staffing difficulties, the decision not to compromise on staff recruitment proved to be wise as appointees to the three FTE Guidance Worker and one Administrator posts soon demonstrated just how critical a resource they were to the outcomes. Most importantly, they each came with a breadth of experience which underpinned the project's holistic approach. For example, the Special Needs worker had a background in social work and one of the Herefordshire staff had many years' experience of recruitment and personnel management in industry.

#### **Accommodation:**

As the geography of project delivery required staff to be located within the areas they serviced, a series of rapid negotiations took place to find suitable accommodation for those staff. The results of those negotiations demonstrated how well the strength of the IAG Partnership could support delivery of the pilot. Bases were quickly identified at Herefordshire College of Technology (for Herefordshire), at Kidderminster College (for North Worcestershire) and at the Malvern Jobcentre (for the Special Needs post). Without this support, both the task of finding and the cost of funding accommodation would have been considerably greater.

The practice of taking the service to the clients did, of course, present problems for staff who effectively needed to carry their offices around with them.

#### **MIS:**

Appropriate record keeping is essential to the successful management of any funded project. Work within the IAG Partnership had already demonstrated the importance of putting in place a system for the collection of accurate and comprehensive MIS and this lesson was transferred to the pilot:

- To collate information about the clients who benefit thus informing and supporting the development of work for those clients.
- To monitor levels of activity and to recommend appropriate remedial action.
- To check that the delivery of the project matched the details in the application.

- To monitor Equal Opportunities.
- To assist in the planning and management of any future projects.
- To control levels of expenditure, to establish that all expenditure was eligible and to compile claims.
- To meet the monitoring needs of the DfES.

The initial level of uncertainty over exactly what MIS was required of the pilot and delays in setting up the database meant it was not actually installed until mid-May 2002. Confusion over some of the entry procedures then caused further delays as certain information needed to be re-entered. Once these problems were overcome, the database proved a valuable management and monitoring tool.

## **ONGOING PILOT DELIVERY**

### **Networking:**

The initial phase of the project involved taking forward the range of partners already available to the IAG network and building on that base in order to:

- Establish a network of referral partners.
- Identify suitable venues in which to host client interviews.
- Enlist the support of complementary support agencies.
- Engage the co-operation of organisations likely to provide clients with opportunities for progression.

Networking was particularly intensive during the first three months of each component although it inevitably required continuous reworking. The structure of the project made it necessary for each of the Guidance Workers to undertake these tasks largely separately.

Despite having a defined territory, some liaison inevitably took place with organisations in neighbouring areas (including Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Shropshire and Wales) when it was logical to make a referral into those areas.

### **Client Interviews:**

The first interviews took place in Herefordshire in January 2002 with the North Worcestershire component becoming operational in April and the Special Needs component following in July. The availability of external funding allowed the project

to concentrate on developing an outreach service which made possible the provision of interviews in remote locations such as Kington where visits would otherwise have been impractical. The map at Annex 1 shows the distribution of delivery locations for each of the three project components. Although every effort was made to schedule interviews in a way which maximised on the number of clients who could be seen at a single location, from 10% to 40% of an adviser's time could be spent travelling in any one day.

Clients frequently presented advisers with a range of issues requiring in-depth guidance. Many had low aspirations or were tied by family commitments. Others had become disaffected at school and alienated from traditional sources of support. Advisers therefore often needed to manage:

- Lack of confidence
- Financial problems
- Family and relationship issues
- Health problems
- Attitude problems
- Loss of identity

before any progress could be made.

Although Herefordshire and Worcestershire are generally characterised by their lack of ethnic diversity, the project did support members of minority groups in the Redditch area. For many interviewees, the culture of competing for jobs was alien and clients therefore required additional support having low expectations of the options and opportunities available to them.

The Special Needs interviews raised particular issues. No attempt was made to narrow the definition by excluding particular clients although the majority had acquired physical or mental disabilities. For many clients, their disability ruled out following their original occupation. Because of the need to determine how their condition impacted on their learning and employment options, most interviews exceeded two hours with some lasting more than three hours. Some users with concentration problems or complex conditions then required subsequent interviews and most needed onward referral to specialist agencies. The time involved in carrying out each assessment, in negotiating with other organisations and in follow-up activities is a serious issue which must be faced if this service is to be continued.

### **Group Sessions:**

The pilot was able to offer group sessions where a range of guidance services were delivered. One such group was run in conjunction with Herefordshire Women's Aid where three sessions were held for 11 clients. The participants were vulnerable females who would have been unwilling to access traditional support and for whom a group context was reassuring and supportive. Other beneficiaries included the Hunderton Family Group. The issues covered at these events included:

- Careers guidance
- Communication skills
- Assertiveness
- Jobsearch techniques
- Transferable skills
- Basic skills assessments

### **Videoconferencing:**

Videoconferencing technology allows two (or more) people at remote locations to see and hear each other. In addition, it is possible to share computer applications such as Internet pages, library materials or software. When a live visit is not possible, it still allows a face-to-face interview to take place. Setting up a videoconference system requires audio-visual equipment (cameras, monitors, microphones and speakers) and a means of transmitting between sites – normally using the Internet or the telephone network.

In setting up the videoconferencing facility, it was assumed that the equipment used in the ADAPT project would be readily transferable to the guidance pilot. In practice:

- Technical difficulties required the installation and configuration of a new server.
- The original remote centre which was identified did not meet the project's requirements for a fully confidential interview area and time was lost while an alternative suitable location was researched and negotiated.
- Some locations proved impractical because of connectivity problems and delays over the availability and installation of a BT line.
- Pressure on technical staff meant their support was not as readily available as had been envisaged.

The remote venue finally chosen was Ross-on-Wye where a room was made available in the local library. Regrettably, these delays meant that the first interviews did not take place until the closing weeks of the project.

Four clients and one Guidance Worker took part in the trials. The system at the client end was set up to minimise stress and the client was not required to operate any equipment. Following those trials, a number of concerns were identified included:

- Body language is more difficult to interpret because of the restricted view of the other person.
- Eye contact requires both parties to look at the camera rather than at each other.
- The time lag in the signal means that the sequencing of normal conversation has to be rethought. The video frame rate varies depending on the connection, the hardware, and the software
- Providing the client with information is relatively straightforward but more complex interactions are less comfortable because of the difficulty of picking up and reacting to signals quickly.
- The normal social conventions – for example, having a coffee together – are not possible.
- The client's response to computers and associated technology can present a barrier. Videoconferencing may be seen as impersonal and some clients will be intimidated by any new technology
- The backdrop in each location needs to be simple.

It has to be recognised that the problems encountered while setting up the system and the consequent delays in implementing a programme of interviews have made any full evaluation of its effectiveness impossible. However, videoconferencing does appear to be a potentially useful communications technology offering new possibilities for guidance work in addition to its proven benefits for tutoring and meetings. Participants can see each other in full colour and with real-time sound and there are additional possibilities – transferring files, opening up and demonstrating software or Internet sites and sharing documents.

As an interactive communication medium, two-way video may offer a number of benefits:

- It can support guidance work between geographically isolated locations or when a live visit is not possible. It is easier than travelling enabling communication to be more frequent. It can be cost effective saving staff time and resources.
- The visual connection and interaction between the client and the guidance worker could help the participants feel more closely connected to each other and is more likely to build a positive relationship than other “distance” methods – for example, telephone, e-mail or online systems.
- A videoconference interview can incorporate additional and diverse media such as video or audio clips, graphics and computer applications.
- With certain clients, the interest created by the new technology could increase motivation.
- Some clients may become more conscious of how other people see them and thus more positive about their appearance and presentation.
- For some clients, the process of participating in videoconferencing could improve communication and management skills.

By removing the need for either the client or the guidance worker to travel yet by still having a two-way link, videoconferencing can support opportunities for guidance interactions that simply could not otherwise take place.

### **Marketing and Promotion:**

Staff took part in a series of marketing sessions to develop publicity materials (including leaflets, posters, flyers and business cards) which were produced both for general awareness raising and to promote specific events. Care was taken to make the language non-threatening and to take account of learning and other disabilities. Many materials were designed to be sensitive to the needs of those with visual impairments and the size and colour of these items were carefully researched.

The help of Community First was enlisted in order to promote the service in outreach locations using their existing network and a supporting article was published in “Newslines” (a community magazine). It soon became clear that the strategies used needed to be local and flexible as clients in, for example, West Herefordshire and North Worcestershire responded in very different ways. This is evidenced by approaches which were made to playgroups and to toddler groups – a tactic which

provided access to a significant number of eligible clients in North Worcestershire but which resulted in no take-up in Herefordshire.

The most expensive campaigns were no guarantee of success. Advertisements were placed in local newspaper but generally had limited impact. More successful were the articles which were produced for local newsletters – for example, “Newswyre” which is delivered free to 45,000 homes in the Wyre Forest area and “The Bridge” which goes to 4,500 homes in Bewdley. School and business newsletters were also used to promote activity.

In Herefordshire, the chain of Online Learning Centres (in Clifford, Hereford, Leominster, Lingen, Longtown, Ross-on-Wye, and South Wye) were used as were the Council’s six “Info in Herefordshire” shops and their associated website.

The project piloted the use of open events, drop-in opportunities and taster sessions but – despite the allocation of resources – overall these met with limited response.

Promoting the project was initially slow as the nature of the service – particularly in the rural areas where there is less awareness of what is on offer – seems to require a drip-feed effect to achieve an impact.

By the close of the project, self-referrals following word-of-mouth recommendations had become a major source of client recruitment.

### **Practitioners’ Group:**

The project followed the model set by the IAG Partnership in operating a practitioners’ group. Because of the short-term nature of the pilot and the need to maximise impact, these meetings were held monthly and:

- Supported the close monitoring of progress against targets.
- Allowed staff to compare operational experiences.
- Encouraged the sharing of good practice.
- Helped develop a team approach and overcome the fact that the Guidance Workers were not co-located.
- Identified potential problems and any remedial action quickly.
- Assisted with the identification of target areas for delivery.
- Facilitated the development of common systems.

### **The Voluntary Sector:**

Because of the large number of voluntary and community organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the project bid recognised the potential for engaging that sector to enable and broker activity. In pursuit of this objective, Community First indicated their willingness to facilitate activity by trawling their database, identifying probable leads, making initial contact with identified organisations and effecting introductions for the Guidance Workers although this work would have incurred a charge.

In practice, the Guidance Workers made those links themselves and did not use Community First as an intermediary. It is possible that Community First – with their ability to exploit an existing range of contacts – would have made this networking process faster and more effective and any future work should look closely at the potential for collaboration. Such an investigation would need to balance the payments which would need to be made to Community First against any savings which might be made on staff time.

The experience of Community First suggested that, if the voluntary sector were to be fully involved, the pilot should recognise that there are genuine costs to those organisations in providing accommodation and support. A “Voluntary Support Fund” was therefore established and £10,000 allocated to promote activity. Advertisements were placed in community newsletters to raise awareness of the fund although, in practice, not all contributing organisations wished to receive reimbursement. Of that allocation, £2,052 was actually claimed by 19 organisations.

It is difficult to be sure that the fund achieved maximum impact and more work needs to be done to understand fully why some organisations did not seek reimbursement. When visiting venues, Guidance Workers explained the availability of the fund and issued a basic form on which to make a claim. These were returned via project staff and paid either by cheque or by bank transfer. The perceived bureaucracy of public authorities can easily put off small voluntary organisations although, within the limits imposed by the need for record keeping and accountability, accessing the fund was designed to be a simple and transparent process.

### **Monitoring and Tracking:**

The Administration and Tracking Assistant enhanced the database by designing and adding a form for those clients who attended second/subsequent interviews and by

inserting a table into the outcome form to record each client's reference and to hold any additional comments.

**Management Arrangements:**

Project management was designed to be both uncomplicated and complementary to those existing arrangements already supporting the Partnership. It was recognised that, for the pilot to achieve maximum impact, decisions needed to be taken at the appropriate level and then implemented quickly and effectively. The Management structure was therefore:

- Strategic overview – IAG Partnership Steering Group
- Day-to-day responsibility – IAG Network Manager
- Monitoring – Pilot Steering Group (meeting monthly)
- Review – Guidance Practitioner Team (meeting monthly)

Specialist advice and support were provided by members of the Partnership as and when necessary with financial and personnel expertise supplied by Connexions (the contract holder for the project) and ICT support provided by Herefordshire College of Technology.

Project management was inevitably complicated by the fact that the team could not be co-located. This threw additional responsibility on the Project Administrator who became the first point of contact for the majority of issues.

## **PROJECT STRENGTHS**

### **Outreach:**

This proposal always recognised the fact that, to achieve maximum impact, it needed to take guidance into areas where the IAG Partnership had not previously had a presence. Funding restrictions meant that some locations were previously routinely ignored despite the fact that many suffered real deprivation. Project staff therefore visited locations which would never normally have been visited and identified organisations which would conventionally have been outside their scope. This pilot offered a first opportunity to take provision to those clients as part of a properly funded and structured programme of guidance.

In enabling the partners to widen the scope of their delivery geographically, many clients wishing to access other IAG services benefited by being made aware of their availability. The example set by the pilot's work is likely to act as a model which will inspire others, both within and outside the network, to aspire to deliver services on an outreach basis.

### **Group Activity:**

The group work which was delivered by the Herefordshire component demonstrated the need for an alternative to the provision of traditional individual interviews. Group activities have a valuable role to play for those seeking a mutually supportive environment.

### **An Holistic Approach:**

Clients approached *Community Outreach* with a variety of issues and expectations. A strength of the pilot was its unwillingness to be constrained by definitions and its determination to tackle the broad range of client needs.

### **MIS:**

The systems for tracking clients, identifying outcomes and recording user feedback were continuously improved by the pilot's Administration and Tracking Assistant. In particular, she implemented a system of telephone interviews which were conducted in the evenings by contacting clients at their homes. These discussions needed to be sensitively handled but were welcomed by participants as an opportunity to discuss

their own experiences. The feedback provided pilot staff with valuable planning information.

Project management and the Steering Group's strategic planning discussions benefited enormously from the well-presented MIS statistics. Of particular value were the output charts which used colour coding to identify any changes in client status including those affecting employment, training and benefit entitlement.

### **Networking and Partnerships:**

*Community Outreach* benefited from the wide variety of organisations supporting its aims. While many of these were existing participants in the IAG Partnership, the pilot recruited an impressive number of new partners. In particular, help was provided with:

- Client recruitment
- Staff accommodation
- Geographical targeting
- Venues for client interviews
- Client progression
- Allied professional backup
- Strategic planning

For example, there were particularly strong links with the network of Jobcentre Plus offices from which came significant numbers of client referrals.

### **Marketing and Publicity:**

Although they were developed using only the staff resources available within the pilot, marketing materials were produced to professional standards. The nature of project delivery required specific targeting which was achieved with the help of local partners. Literature was designed to be informative but non-threatening and customised to suit particular events.

### **Project Staff:**

The project's key resource was its personnel and the importance of committed and proactive staff cannot be overstated. *Community Outreach* benefited in particular from the determination of its central team to find solutions even when success seemed

elusive. Their constant belief that the project was making a difference and their willingness to adapt and to try new approaches were fundamental to its achievements.

**DfES Funding:**

The pilot's funding allowed the guidance staff posts to be fully supported from within the DfES budget. This level of guaranteed income enabled the project to take risks which individual members of the IAG Partnership would never have found possible if posts had been funded on the basis of interview numbers. The relative freedom this provided shifted the focus to the real guidance issues and to the level of professional expertise required to deliver a quality service. It allowed staff the freedom to revisit fundamental issues and to re-evaluate the way forward.

## **PARTNER INVOLVEMENT**

### **The IAG Partnership:**

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire IAG Partnership has been critical to the operation of this pilot which was closely integrated into the overall network. Members have received regular reports on progress and have provided strategic and practical support by identifying and quantifying the need for guidance, by contributing members to both the working group which designed the bid and the Pilot Steering Group, by providing accommodation for pilot staff, by providing technical support whenever needed and by facilitating links into their communities.

The members of the IAG Steering Group are:

- Connexions (Herefordshire & Worcestershire) – Chair
- Evesham College
- Herefordshire College of Technology
- Kidderminster College
- North East Worcestershire College
- The REDI Centre (Redditch)
- Worcester College of Technology
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community First (Herefordshire & Worcestershire)
- Jobcentre plus
- Learning & Skills Council (Herefordshire & Worcestershire)
- University College Worcester

In addition to these core members, there is a wider network of strategic and delivery partners who support the aims of the Partnership.

### **The Voluntary Sector:**

The role of the voluntary sector and of community organisations in IAG is still imperfectly understood. Although not specifically set up for that purpose, it is likely that the work of at least 300 separate voluntary organisations in the area impacts in some way on IAG – varying from general information to the provision of advice for those with specific difficulties. The diverse nature – and the overwhelming number – of these organisations made it essential that a close alliance was formed with an umbrella organisation able to link with a variety of voluntary networks, help access their

considerable potential resources, and provide the Partnership with a strategic view of the sector. In Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Community First (a founder member of the IAG network) was uniquely placed to fulfil this role having access to many local networks and an appreciation of the ethos and operating standards of organisations within the sector.

### **Project Components:**

The three project components each benefited from their ability to use existing IAG contacts. The large number of organisations (in the region of 100) who contributed to the those components makes it impossible to list them all but some of the many who made a positive contribution by referring clients or by supporting interviews were:

- MENCAP (including the MENCAP Advance Project) offered joint working and progression opportunities.
- The Allset Consortium who facilitate access to employment.
- Jobcentre Plus whose offices were a major source of client referrals especially for those with Special Needs.
- The All Women's House in Redditch.
- The Letwork Consortium who promote employment opportunities for the disabled in Worcestershire.
- Community Service Volunteers in Redditch.
- The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in Worcester provided a safe location for people with disabilities and offered progression to their own programme of courses. That venue also housed a number of other community and advice groups.
- Rubery Library.
- Connexions in Hereford where the Adult Careers Advisor identified clients who would benefit from an enhanced level of service.
- South Wye Online Learning Centre who publicised the service and arranged open and drop-in events.
- Herefordshire Council including the "Information in Herefordshire" shops.
- Worcestershire County Council including the "Sub-Employment Group" for people with learning disabilities.

On occasions, the support offered by partner organisations was almost overwhelming. For example, staff at Rubery library not only provided a secure base from which to deliver interviews but also advertised the service and, in collaboration with the guidance worker for North Worcestershire, co-ordinated client appointments. There were occasions when staff approaches met with limited response but these were very isolated.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

### **IAG Partnership Events:**

All staff engaged on the pilot were able to attend any of the training events offered by the IAG Partnership during the life of the project. These included:

- Labour Market Information
- Internet Training
- CV Training
- Managing Change
- Special Needs Workshop
- Listening and Questioning Techniques
- Telephone Techniques
- Action Planning

### **External Training:**

The Special Needs Guidance Worker has been undertaking an NVQ 4 in Guidance.

### **Training Needs:**

In the absence of professional marketing advice, staff felt that they would have benefited from the availability of training in publicity and promotion techniques. They also identified the need for constant updating on qualification and curriculum changes.

### **On-the-Job Training:**

It should be recognised that the innovative and experimental nature of a project such as *Community Outreach* required staff to develop a range of skills “on the job” and reinforced existing skills.

## **PROJECT ISSUES**

### **Staff Recruitment:**

By far the most significant barrier to progress was the pilot's inability to recruit qualified staff in time for the launch of the service. The late appointments to two of the four original guidance posts and the eventual dropping of the post for South Worcestershire all had a critical impact on the outcomes. The shortage of guidance staff is a national issue which needs addressing urgently if a comprehensive service is to be introduced.

### **Target Numbers:**

The issue of staff recruitment impacted immediately on the project's ability to meet its target numbers. The final number was eroded further by the need of some clients for more extensive or additional interviews and by "no-shows".

### **Rurality:**

Many people in rural areas experience difficulty accessing the services they need. The majority of rural communities have no bank and no GP and poor public transport increases isolation. The long-term sick or disabled, the unemployed, those on social security benefits, lone parents, older people, younger people, those in poverty or on low incomes and those with young children have particular problems. People living in rural areas are generally less well informed about the services which are available to them and marketing is more difficult. It is also important to recognise that, for these clients, there are likely to be fewer options and opportunities making progression from the guidance interview more problematic.

The geography and infrastructure therefore make delivering a local guidance service within a predominantly rural area like Herefordshire and Worcestershire difficult and expensive. The low population density and the remoteness of many locations from the main centres of population require staff to travel considerable distances between venues. This impacts both on the potential number of interviews which can be carried out and on the cost of employing staff and meeting travel costs.

**Client Needs:**

In the context of an adult guidance interview, staff may identify a range of client needs which must be addressed before progress can be made. These issues may be financial, social, emotional or psychological and place additional demands on the role of the Guidance Worker. They require sensitive handling and a broad understanding of the availability of complementary services.

Frequently, the issues are so complex that they cannot be handled adequately in one intervention. Clients facing multiple barriers take longer to make progress and require second and subsequent interviews. The progressive nature of disability can also create the need for preparatory work with any potential employer.

Many clients have Basic Skills difficulties which check their development. This was particularly significant in the case of Special Needs clients where 33% were identified as having problems with Basic Skills.

Although largely unrecognised by professionals, rural isolation can be an important factor in engendering stress. For example, as the numbers employed in the countryside have fallen, rural workers have become more socially isolated and have fewer contacts with people who empathise with their problems. The accompanying change in the constituency of the population is likely to increase that stress as the original support structures of rural communities decline. Additionally, the influx of newcomers often creates a form of cultural isolation.

**Client Withdrawals:**

Every effort was made to minimise the risk of client withdrawals which impacted on the advisers' overall effectiveness and on the project's resources. Despite these precautions, there were some clients who did not attend their interviews. This was a particular issue with the Special Needs component where the rate was 22% – a problem most acute among those participants suffering from mental health problems and learning disabilities.

**Technical Support:**

Project delivery would have benefited from the wider availability of Internet access in order to support both staff and client needs. Connectivity difficulties were constantly experienced not only in outreach locations but also in the base locations. On

occasions, more immediate technical support was needed to assist when, for example, computer equipment was malfunctioning.

**Short-Term Funding:**

The relative shortness of the project's life (exacerbated by staff recruitment and setting-up problems) produced a situation where delivery was maximised only during the final two months. Working to this tight deadline also impacted on staff morale.

Any future guidance programmes need to recognise that output-related funding is unlikely to deal adequately with the needs of the most disadvantaged clients.

## **GOOD PRACTICE**

### **Partnership:**

A successful guidance interview is the product of collaboration and teamwork. Much of the project's success was due to the strength which came from working in partnership – both under the aegis of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire IAG Network (which provided strategic and practical support) and in collaboration with the myriad of organisations which contributed accommodation, staff and other resources. Positive outcomes result from joint working with the voluntary and statutory organisations.

In developing a partnership, “umbrella” organisations can be particularly useful because of their ability to disseminate information through an existing network of contacts. Building on the work of complementary agencies who already have successful activities in place can also save time and resources.

### **The Guidance Process:**

To be successful, adult guidance must:

- Be client centred.
- Diagnose and meet client needs.
- Include problem solving.
- Identify short-term and long-term goals.
- Address barriers to participation.
- Be realistic about the options.
- Include action planning.

Guidance is likely to have the greatest impact when a comprehensive infrastructure is in place to support client progression.

### **Outreach:**

By taking provision into local communities, guidance providers:

- Remove barriers and encourage clients in need to take that first step.
- Have a greater chance of gaining public confidence and therefore engaging traditional non-participants.
- Can ensure the availability of a customised quality service in excluded areas.

## **MIS:**

Measuring the impact of guidance is fundamental to:

- Quality control and the continuous improvement of the service.
- Enhancing progression opportunities.
- Understanding the social impact.
- Quantifying the economic benefits.

The pilot therefore included a dedicated post to support data collection and to manage client tracking.

The pilot recognised the need to obtain feedback in ways which were client friendly and unobtrusive. One method which was particularly successful was phoning users in the evenings to discuss both their experiences at interview and any subsequent outcomes. Clients were almost universally positive about being approached in this way and the exercise provided the pilot with a wealth of detailed comments.

Guidance workers were encouraged to seek comments on the service they were providing at the point of interview and to include these on the client's outcome form.

## **Publicity and Promotion:**

In order to be effective, promotional activities should:

- Be local and sensitive to area needs.
- Brand according to the target audience.
- Exploit existing links whenever possible – the Jobcentre Plus network had an immediate understanding of the issues.
- Build on the work of successful activities – the Lifelong Learning Partnerships for Herefordshire and Worcestershire had existing networks through which to promote the service.
- Exploit the influence of community agents e.g. mother and toddler groups.
- Be continuous – the drip-feed effect does work.
- Be prepared to respond flexibly.
- Recognise the impact of word-of-mouth.
- Take into account the needs of those with physical impairments.

**Venues:**

It is important to provide the Guidance Worker with a safe and congenial environment in which to meet clients. The premises of impartial, community-based organisations can aid accessibility. To achieve maximum impact, interview rooms should:

- Be within a friendly environment.
- Provide total privacy.
- Be free from telephone interruptions.
- Have controllable heating.
- Be naturally lit.
- Have adequate space.
- Be comfortably furnished.
- Allow access for the disabled (including, as necessary, appropriate modes of communication for adults with visual, hearing or learning difficulties).

## **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

### **Videoconferencing:**

Because of the limited nature of the videoconferencing trials, it has not been possible to draw any firm conclusions and more research is necessary if the potential benefits are to be properly tested. Additional members of staff need to explore this method in order to allow techniques and results to be compared and the provision of specific staff training should be considered.

### **Outreach:**

Outreach work in the community is key to progress in a rural and semi-rural area such as Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It takes provision to remote and deprived locations which were previously neglected and redresses the balance which is frequently created in favour of urban centres and larger populations. This aspect of the pilot's work requires replicating on a broader scale.

### **The Voluntary Sector:**

Although the pilot made significant progress in enlisting the involvement of the voluntary sector, the number and range of organisations within that sector suggests that, as yet, its full potential is unrealised.

### **Special Needs:**

As there is still a stigma attached to Special Needs, the guidance process proved an excellent method by which to diagnose these problems in the context of a confidential interview.

The Special Needs component tested approaches to guidance for a particularly vulnerable group of clients. This was innovative work which needs replicating beyond the life of the pilot if its impact is to be fully realised.

There is a continuing need to identify and contact agencies dealing with the disabled. In particular, there is scope for collaboration with Housing associations, Social Services, the Hospital and Occupational Therapy Services and the Primary Care Trusts and for joint outreach working with disabled people's voluntary organisations where there are multiple barriers to participation in addition to transport problems.

**Workforce Development:**

The project had limited time in which to develop meaningful relationships with employers and those which were cultivated tended to be prompted by specific issues such as the impact of redundancies. There is considerable potential for work with the employed although this will require sound groundwork if employers are to understand the nature of the service and how it differs from those offered by Jobcentres and training providers.

**Research:**

Although outside the scope of this project, there is a need for research which will build a comprehensive picture of the infrastructure of Herefordshire and Worcestershire and provide statistical data to help focus efforts on areas of greatest need.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

*Community Outreach* produced many positive outcomes and has provided the IAG Partnership with a model for future activity. In summary, the most important messages are:

- You cannot do it alone. Building good relationships with agencies in the public and the voluntary sectors is of paramount importance. Both you and your partners will benefit.
- Having the backup of a large organisation can provide access to a range of services which might not otherwise be available. Staff at Connexions were a major source of specialist advice. The project manager's role as IAG Network Manager supported his and enhanced his project responsibilities.
- Traditionally, the size of any settlement is a key factor in establishing whether economies of scale will make a service viable. Dispersed rural populations impose considerable travel burdens on staff and create additional networking problems. The geography of an area must be taken into account in designing an adult guidance service.
- If the difficulties of testing and implementing new technologies are to be overcome, it is essential to have a well-researched workplan and adequate technical support.
- It is difficult to reconcile an activity which aims to give clients a customised service with interview targets.
- Publicity should be local and user focused.
- Interview venues must meet minimum standards of privacy and comfort.
- Materials need to be non-threatening and should be tested with users.
- Be cautious about delivering guidance "on spec" – go when you know people are actively seeking help. Drop-in activities sound responsive but they are often of limited value compared with pre-booked sessions.
- Regular monitoring and the availability of comprehensive records of project activity are key to understanding the activity's impact and to forward planning. A dedicated post to manage data collection and client tracking is a wise investment.

- You cannot compromise on the quality of project staff. They are your key resource.
- Team spirit is critical if staff are to be mutually supportive.

## **PROJECT OUTCOMES**

### **Client Numbers:**

During its operating period, the pilot delivered 526 first and 40 subsequent interviews.

Annexes 4, 5, and 6 show client numbers by:

- Project component
- Outcome forms
- Further guidance
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability status

### **Soft Outcomes:**

In addition to the quantified outcomes, clients have benefited from the contribution the project has made in:

- Increasing confidence and self-esteem
- Improving personal and interpersonal skills
- Enhancing organisational and analytical skills
- Reducing social isolation
- Increasing understanding of the available career options
- Enhancing opportunities to access training
- Improving understanding of and access to other support agencies
- Increasing awareness of IAG and the role it can play

### **Placements and Progression:**

Annex 3 shows client destinations.

## **CONTRACTOR SUPPORT**

### **Merlin Minds:**

Merlin Minds provided a project mentor who regularly visited the team and was readily available for discussions. He worked with the IAG Network Manager to identify problems and to recommend remedial action. Having conducted the risk assessment, he was the first contact in rescheduling the plan of work and in adjusting the expenditure profile.

In support of his role as project mentor, the representative from Merlin Minds attended the majority of the project's Steering Group meetings. This was particularly helpful in:

- Providing a more objective view of progress.
- Updating project staff on DfES news and developments.
- Facilitating contacts with other pilots.
- Promoting an understanding of the wider adult guidance picture.
- Giving support when it was needed!

### **MORI:**

After some forced delays, MORI contacted the project in November 2002 as part of their evaluation of the range of approaches taken by the pilots, the need for a guidance service and the overall impact of the projects. As their brief was to select from clients interviewed before the end of June 2002, a letter needed to be sent on their behalf to those clients from the early stages of the project for whom no consent forms were held. As this mailing took place in January 2003, there was a predictably poor response. Unfortunately, it also excluded any Special Needs clients as all their interviews were held after the eligible date.

Project staff suggested that client interviews be held in a variety of venues across the two counties although, in the end, the only location chosen was Worcester. Project staff have had no confirmation of the fact but it is believed that some interviews also took place in clients' homes. MORI were offering to pay £10 per client as recompense for giving up time to attend an interview. As this sum included reimbursement of travel costs, it was unlikely to be an incentive for those needing to travel in an area where public transport is sometimes limited and costs are relatively high.

It is hoped that the results of this evaluation will provide a valuable insight into the work of the pilots although, as yet, no feedback has been received from MORI.

**IES:**

The project has had no direct contact with IES.

**DRS (Data Resource Specialist – Birmingham):**

DRS installed the project database and were always approachable. They provided a helpful telephone trouble-shooting service.

## **CASE STUDIES**

## Case Study 1

### **The Client**

Rosina was 26 and had very limited formal education. She wanted to work in childcare once her own son had gone to school.

### **The Adviser**

Dee is a graduate and qualified teacher who has completed a Counselling Skills course and who is currently undertaking a Guidance NVQ. She is a member of Herefordshire College of Technology's Adult Careers Guidance Centre and has many years' experience of recruitment, personnel and training in industry.

### **The Guidance Process**

Dee discussed the qualifications Rosina would need to enter childcare and how these could be obtained. After a Basic Skills assessment, she was able to reassure Rosina that her literacy and numeracy skills were better than she believed and that with help they would improve considerably. An action plan was produced to identify the way forward.

### **Client Issues**

Rosina was particularly concerned about her literacy and numeracy skills. She was nervous about undergoing an assessment and needed reassurance over the process. She also had concerns about her son's health which left her worried and fatigued. Dee therefore believed that Rosina needed to work within a small group environment away from any formal institution if she was to develop her skills and gain in confidence.

### **The Outcomes**

After undertaking the Basic Skills assessment and after further support and encouragement, Rosina was convinced that she could cope with studying for an NVQ. She agreed to attend the Hunderton family room (a "safe" environment) where she will receive help with literacy and numeracy. Ultimately, she hopes to study for an NVQ 2 in Childcare.

### **The Impact**

Rosina is likely to achieve her ambitions in about one year. Her Basic Skills will then have improved, she will be qualified to NVQ 2 and she will be economically active.

### **What the Client Said**

"I'm really enjoying my course. I wish I'd done it sooner. I wouldn't have done it without you"

## Case Study 2

### **The Client**

Timothy had qualified as a motor mechanic and achieved an Assessor Award to provide workplace training. He had been made Warranty Administrator by his employer but had gone on long-term sick leave because of the stresses of his job.

### **The Adviser**

Rebecca is a graduate and qualified Careers Adviser with 10 years' experience of providing adult guidance in FE and the community.

### **The Guidance Process**

The interview considered Timothy's background and the reasons for his stress. Given his love of the motor industry, it was important to explore whether leaving the profession was his best option. His excellent qualifications and his enthusiastic approach to sharing this interest led Rebecca to discuss other career options within the same field. One of these was teaching which would build on the strength of his Assessor award.

### **Client Issues**

Timothy needed to work to support his family but could not cope with the stress of his job.

### **The Outcomes**

As a result of his interview, Timothy identified a suitable change of career and is now working in the FE sector. He is also taking a Teaching Certificate.

### **The Impact**

Timothy has found a career niche and achieved his goal of financial security. He is no longer claiming Sickness Benefit or Income Support.

### **What the Client Said**

"I went with reference to a complete change of career. The advice given was very good and professional. Since then I have gone into my new career. I am very grateful for the advice."

## Case Study 3

### **The Client**

Karen was in her early 30's and seeking a change of career having become disabled. An injury to her spine had forced her redundancy from light engineering and she needed a career within the physical constraints imposed by her back injury. As a mature student, Karen had gained A Level Art and Social Science and Engineering qualifications.

### **The Adviser**

Angela is a graduate with a background in social work. She is completing an NVQ 4 in Guidance.

### **The Guidance Process**

Guidance explored the impact of Angela's injuries on her career choices. Computer-aided guidance was utilised to demonstrate how many transferable skills she had to offer an employer and to generate a list of potentially suitable careers. It was agreed she would prioritise from this list and she and Angela negotiated who was to follow up on her information needs. Practical assistance with overcoming her dyslexia was discussed and offered.

### **Client Issues**

Karen had already been forced to seek one unsuccessful change of career. Having undertaken an HE Access course, Karen persisted with her studies despite reading and spelling difficulties before she was diagnosed as suffering from Dyslexia. She did not wish these difficulties to lead to her being bullied again as had happened at school. She had also suffered unfair treatment in the workplace and was lacking in confidence.

### **The Outcomes**

Karen narrowed down the list of potential new careers and spoke to her local Higher Education Institution about the preferred options. She has chosen to embark on a Degree in Business Information Systems. She now recognises that her disability is less of a barrier than she believed.

### **The Impact**

Through appropriate guidance, Karen has been able to progress to Higher Education despite the constraints imposed by her disabilities. Her determination to succeed is likely to result in her coming off benefit in order to undertake those studies.

### **What the Client Said**

“Guidance was useful because it helped me get out of limbo at home and find my next steps to a new career.”

## Case Study 4

### **The Client**

Herefordshire Women's Aid is a refuge for women suffering from domestic violence.

### **The Adviser**

Dee is a graduate and qualified teacher who has completed a Counselling Skills course and who is currently undertaking a Guidance NVQ. She is a member of Herefordshire College of Technology's Adult Careers Guidance Centre and has many years' experience of recruitment, personnel and training in industry.

### **The Guidance Process**

Dee felt that the women would benefit from working in a mutually supportive group environment but that they would be more receptive to help at an outreach location away from the formal atmosphere of an educational institution. It was particularly important that they attended an anonymous venue and did not feel intimidated by their environment. Three sessions were delivered covering assertiveness, communication skills and transferable skills.

### **Client Issues**

After suffering from domestic violence, the women taking part needed their confidence levels rebuilding. They all had low self-esteem and were finding difficulty in moving on from their current situations. They were easily overawed by "authority" and would not have considered coming to a traditional course.

### **The Outcomes**

The sessions achieved their aim and all the participants showed an increase in confidence and a deeper perception of themselves and the options available to them in the future.

### **The Impact**

These sessions have significantly increased the likelihood that the participants will be able to move from their situations and, with a greater understanding of themselves and the options available to them, become economically active.

### **What the Clients Said**

"Dee was really informative and very approachable."

"I'm not as thick as I thought I was. I have got skills and this course showed me. It was relaxed and friendly."

"I enjoyed the workshops and they gave me new ideas."

## What Our Clients Said About Us

*"I don't know how I would have coped without this service."*

*"Very, very helpful. Everything has fallen into place."*

*"Instead of focusing on a backwards step, the interview made me look forward again. I feel more settled but am keeping my options open."*

*"CHOICES FOR WOMEN was a valuable experience. All the staff were very professional, enthusiastic and helpful."*

*"The Guidance Worker helped very much. I was put on the right road."*

*"The best thing about the guidance session was realising that I had been blinkered and that there was much more out there."*

*"Very helpful and very encouraging. Rebecca is a top-class lady."*

*"Following my interview, I enrolled on a computer course to update my skills. I was very pleased with the information I was given and am now in the process of looking for employment. Thanks for your help."*

*"If I hadn't gone for the interview, I wouldn't be on the course I am on now."*

*"This should be available to everyone with a disability."*

*"Until I saw you, I focused on what I couldn't do rather than what I can do."*

*"You've given me the confidence to try for a Degree despite my disability."*

*"The Guidance Worker could not have been more helpful finding me college courses which helped at my interview securing my present job."*

## **IN CONCLUSION – THE CASE FOR GUIDANCE**

### **Making A Difference:**

- The experience of *Community Outreach* provides first-hand evidence of the need for a local adult guidance service. Client reactions were overwhelmingly positive and supportive.
- Professional guidance changes people’s lives and has both a social and an economic impact. By the close of the pilot, 11% of those who responded had come off benefit.
- Taking support into the community provides guidance opportunities which could not otherwise happen.

### **The Rural Dimension:**

In delivering an adult guidance service in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, it is important to recognise that there is a rural dimension which presents particular problems and that a “one-size” solution is therefore impractical. Responding to the needs of isolated communities requires an extension of the geographical spread of provision made possible by this project. Offering a traditional service only in locations where the economy of scale justifies the delivery costs means that many clients have to travel – often considerable distances. In areas where transport links are poor, this adds yet another barrier to participation. Additional funding will allow an extension of existing delivery points to provide services in rural areas.

For those with the financial means, the problem of a lack of services is offset by the benefits of living in a rural area. However, such coping strategies are not appropriate for those with limited financial resources or inadequate access to transport.

### **Meeting Client Needs:**

A fully responsive service requires the delivery of a comprehensive IAG programme to meet individual need. This demands an holistic approach which rises above the issue of whether that activity is “advice” or “guidance” and provides clients with the services they want – when they want them and where they want them.

The multiple barriers faced by many clients (including those with Special Needs) make in-depth guidance essential if those individuals are to benefit. This requires

individual interview sessions which can exceed two hours and frequently necessitates second and subsequent interviews. This is difficult to reconcile with any funding approach which is primarily driven by targets or unit costs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Particular thanks are due to:

### **The *Community Outreach Pilot Staff:***

**Angela Hunt**

Guidance Worker (Special Needs)

**Chris Jones**

Project Manager

**Janet Langford**

Guidance Worker (Herefordshire)

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**Sue Warren**

Guidance Worker (Herefordshire)

**Dee Waters**

Guidance Worker (Herefordshire)



Jane Sherwin   Chris Jones   Janet Langford

Rebecca McRorie   Angela Hunt

### **The *Community Outreach Pilot Steering Group:***

Chris Jones – IAG Network Manager (Chair)

Jan Brant – Community First

Chris Bucknell – Herefordshire College of Technology

David Exall – Connexions

Sheila Harris – Connexions

Angela Hunt – Guidance Worker (Special Needs)

Brian Knowles – Project Consultant

Janet Langford – Guidance Worker (Herefordshire)

Rebecca McRorie – Guidance Worker (North Worcestershire)

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LOGO

**Herefordshire and Worcestershire Information, Advice and  
Guidance  
(IAG) Partnership**