



# Work Focussed Services Pilot – A Centre Perspective

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# Participating Sandwell Children's Centres

- *Working in partnership with the Local Authority, Jobcentre Plus, Joblink, and the following Sure Start Children's Centres :*
- Friar Park, Mesty Croft & Woods Children's Centre
- Tipton Children's Centre
- **Wednesbury North Children's Centre**
- Work focused services embedded in each children's centre.
- JCP Advisors and children's centre staff working together as part of an integrated team.
- Services primarily aimed at **Lone parents and non-working parents** with a youngest child up to age 5

# Wednesbury North - Background

- Phase 2 Centre, officially opened November 2008, designated as Full Core Offer Centre February 2009
- Based at Old Park Primary School, who act as lead agency
- Reach area covers 726 under 5's
- High multiple deprivation factors, and a changing community
- A small multi –agency team with a thriving day nursery

# A snapshot – last weeks activities

## Wednesbury North

### Monday

**Stay & Play @ Old Park Primary School**

Spanish for 3 - 5yr olds @ WNCC

Bumps & Babes @ WNCC

Adult Literacy and Numeracy @ WNCC

### Tuesday

**Family Fun for Under 5's @ Holyhead School**

**Stay & Play – Jack & Jills @ Methodist Church**

Accredited Food Hygiene Course @ WNCC

**Stay & Play @ St Johns Primary School,**  
Citizens Advice Bureau @ WNCC

### Wednesday

**Story & Crafts @ Wednesbury Library**

**Stay & Play @ St Marys Catholic School**

Young Parents Group @ WNCC

### Thursday

**Cradle Club @ Wednesbury Library**

**Citizens Advice Bureau, OUTREACH ½ Day**

Ante-natal workshop @ WNCC

### Friday

**Stay & Play @ St Barts Church Hall,**  
Accredited Mentoring Course @ WNCC

Baby Massage @ WNCC

Indian Head Massage @ WNCC

### Saturday

**Dads Group @ Wednesbury Library,**  
**11.00am - 12.30pm**

# Why? Wednesbury North Rationale for bidding into pilot

- The nearest Jobcentre Plus offices to Wednesbury North Children's Centre are as follows: West Bromwich 3.4 miles, Walsall 3.1 miles
- Consultation with parents in 2007/08 identified the lack of Jobcentre Plus and employment/training advice within Wednesbury as a major barrier for parents looking to return to work.
- Rising unemployment within the area at time with manufacturing, distribution, retail and construction hard hit locally as recession began
- Changing issues of child poverty in area – many low-income, 1 earner families finding themselves workless for first time
- Ongoing priority to support child poverty agenda locally

# Work focussed services – what are they

- 1:1 interviews and work planning sessions
- Courses and work experiences to increase skills
- Volunteering opportunities
- Case studies / good news stories
- Mentoring opportunities
- Activities such as help with CV writing, job search, completing application forms and interview technique
- Advice and guidance to help remove practical barriers e.g. childcare, transport

# A brief timeline of start up

- November 2008 confirmed as successful
- November 2008 – December 2008 set up of infrastructure; dedicated room allocated; IT networking; initial set up meetings
- January 2009 Kevin Smith joined as the Centres dedicated Jobcentre Plus advisor, and was supported by the provision of a support officer Elle Price from Joblink on 4 afternoons a week
- Promotional activities January 2009 – March 2009
- March 2009 First caseloaded client enters employment
- May 2009 First caseloaded parent with child under 5 enters employment

# Impact – Wednesbury North

- 388 customers joining pilot – 0 declined offer to return to Centre as opposed to accessing via main Jobcentre Plus office
- 62 parents of children under 5 currently on caseload
- 79 customers who have engaged via Centre have gone on to employment
- Of 79 who went into employment, 70 remain in work and off benefits to present
- 45 of those going into employment are parent of child under 5

(All data as of 01/01/11)

# Impact – Wednesbury North Training

COURSE	NO	REQUESTS	ATT	PASS	CASE LOADED	JOBS
Food Hygiene	4	82	31	31	13	2
First Aid	4	89	31	31	12	4
Health and Safety	4	91	34	31	13	2
Manual Handling	2	38	15	15	4	1
Paediatric First Aid	3	69	30	30	11	2
Door Supervisor	1	9	5	4	2	1
Creative Writing	1	4	1	1	0	0
Mentoring	1	23	16		7	0
Customer Service	1	23	10	10	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>12</b>

# Centre Benefits

- Increased range of services available to parents
- Increased reach and access to Centre
- Client led training programme
- Increased number of volunteers – 2 prior to pilot 16 currently
- Increased capacity of CAB advisor
- Increased awareness across all staff

# Nursery Benefits

- Parents more aware of Working Tax Credits and in-work benefits and have a point of contact for support
- Supported sustainability of provision
- 51 parents who have accessed day nursery provision have had support via Kevin and Elle

# Wednesbury North Success Criteria

- A committed, experienced and well qualified team
- All partners buying into the approach
- Integration of pilot staff into Centre team
- Clear and realistic marketing for parents
- Ability to tailor individual support within framework of Jobcentre and Children's Centre
- Egos left at the door

# The Future?

- We don't know!
- Pilot in current format ends 31/03/11
- Whatever happens, we have seen a better way of working for all partners but more importantly significantly improved outcomes for parents

# A final thought

We ask Centre staff to get to the root cause of families issues – if it is domestic violence, smoking cessation, parenting or post natal depression we would expect staff have a solution. If unemployment is the major issue for a family, how well equipped is your team to support?

# Any Questions?

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