

The Partnership

The Renfrewshire Workforce Plus (RWf+) Partnership (PRP) delivers a range of services under the Renfrewshire Workforce Plus (RWF+) programme. Partners are organisations which are; (1) a member of mainstream community planning partnerships, and, (2) in receipt of funding from RWF+. The partnership has officially existed since January 2007 when Workforce Plus 'closing the opportunity gap' funding became available. Before this date a similar non-formalised partnership existed.

Bill Anderson, RWF+ Manager, describes the aims of RWf+ as “to identify and provide support services for Renfrewshire residents that matches employment, education and training opportunities to residents with multiple barriers to employment in a seamless, co-ordinated, wrapped around way so that clients can move through the service provision easily with the minimum disruption or confusion.”



The Challenges

Strategy

Initially the strategy was developed as the 'Renfrewshire Employability Action Plan' (EAP), which was Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership's response to the Scottish Government's Workforce Plus – an employability framework for Scotland document. The EAP set out a number of key statistics and resulting future planning.

Partners

Challenges for the partners include; dealing with a large number of organisations with varying individual aims, keeping expectations realistic, conflict management, and, balancing requirements of national and local needs.

Membership

As RWf+ is young, there are a small number of organisations who are not yet represented.

The Solutions

Strategy

The strategy has moved on in conjunction with the Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership's bid for European money. The targets within the application have become the basis of the new strategy.

Partners

Bill Anderson reports, “(it is) very positive that people and delivery partners have been willing to argue with me and in some cases downright disagree with me, this has meant that as a partnership any agreement reached is one that the partners are committed to delivering. That's makes the RWf+ more effective and interesting than a partnership with little or no “real” interaction between partners. The partners are committed to delivering real change”.

Membership

RWf+ has representatives from Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Community Health Partnership, Skills Development Scotland, Jobcentre Plus, Reid Kerr College, Enable Scotland, Barnardo's, Capability Scotland and One Parent Families Scotland.

The Impact

Customers

Bill Anderson's view is that "the biggest impact that RWf+ has had is the ability to react in terms of service provision ... where there's a gap identified by one of the partners, the partnership can move en masse ... and what the participants sees is somebody taking decisions that impact on their life immediately ... although the partnership is in its early days, what they're seeing is a huge difference in the partnership's ability to deliver services in a one-stop shop". One partner describes the most enjoyable element of being involved in the partnership as being "able to add value to the local service provision and in particular support the transition of clients between different services supporting their employability needs".

Employers

Employers are also noticing a difference since the formation of RWf+. They are supported and paid to deliver training, guaranteeing jobs at the end of it. There are currently plans for many more sectors to become involved in this initiative.

Support Required

In its beginning RWf+ benefited greatly from the following:

- A communication line which allowed them to ask questions to the Scottish Government in relation to good and bad practice.
- A sophisticated management information process which was usable by all 7 Workforce Plus areas.
- An electronic resource which allowed relevant information to be passed to the partnership, e.g. events, strategic papers, policies, etc.

In the future, PRP would like the following support from the Scottish Government:

- Continued support as is.
- A Learning Network which includes shared experiences, case studies, information and systems. The network should have clarity and not drift from this.
- The delivery of solutions to larger issues, e.g. benefits, funding, etc.

Next Steps

PRP has aspirations for the future development; at least some of which follow:

- To develop the partnership's structure and service provision.
- To evaluate the partnership's work, ensuring it is having a positive impact on service delivery.
- To increase the number of organisations delivering through the partnership, e.g. the NHS.
- To investigate developing the partnership model to work in other sectors.