

a level playing field



employability
equal opportunities
adaptability
entrepreneurship

> Tackling discrimination through innovation

Tackling discrimination through innovation

The North East Wales Equal-Cyfartal Development Partnership involves representatives from the following organisations:

- **Wrexham County Borough Council – Lead Partner**
 - **Airbus UK**
 - **Brighter Futures**
 - **Broker Cymru**
 - **Careers Wales**
 - **Children's Information Bureau**
 - **Deeside College**
 - **Denbighshire County Council**
 - **ELWa**
 - **Flintshire County Council**
 - **Flintshire Representative Group**
 - **Job Centre Plus**
 - **Llandrillo College**
 - **Llysfasi College**
 - **NHS Trust**
 - **Welsh Ambulance Service**
 - **Welsh College of Horticulture**
 - **Welsh Development Agency**
 - **WTUC**
 - **Yale College**

We thank them for their participation and look forward to many other companies joining us in the future...

EQUAL is an ESF (European Social Fund) Community Initiative Programme (CIP). The scheme is an innovative and exciting programme that tests out new practices and contributes to long-term policy development across Europe.

EQUAL in Wales is part of a UK and European-wide initiative with devolved management and multi-agency involvement. It covers 5 main areas:

- **Employability**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Adaptability**
- **Equal Opportunities**
- **Asylum Seekers**

EQUAL brings together key players geographically or in a specific sector; Public administration, non-governmental organisations, social partners, and the business sector form 'Development Partnerships', pooling their diverse expertise and experience.

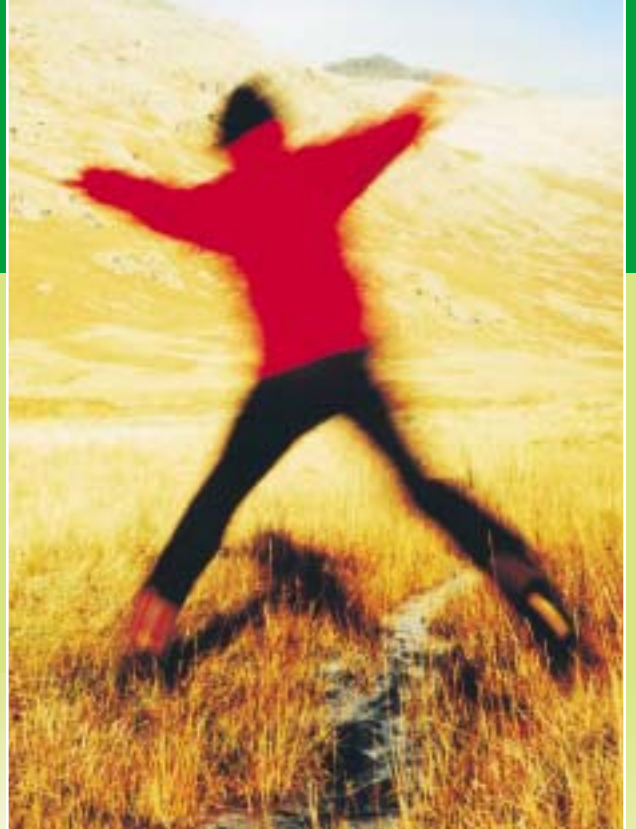
EQUAL Development Partnerships have a variety of different strategies within which they develop and trial new ways of dealing with discrimination and inequality.



who are we?

As the only Equal programme in North Wales for the first round, and with the theme of 'Employability', Cyfartal has been actively involved in changing the attitudes and perceptions of key service deliverers and employers since November 2001.

Cyfartal's main focus is 'Empowerment'; we have already made significant progress towards promoting attitudinal change within North-East Wales. This brochure highlights our successes, and will be continually updated until the conclusion of the project, in May 2005.



activity – making the change

Individuals within our focus groups have helped us identify areas where initial pilot activities can make a real impact on specific barriers to service delivery. Everyone has been encouraged to contribute to the design, implementation, and dissemination of any key activities and ideas that have taken place.

Support from policy-makers has been crucial to the development of Cyfartal. We've made many contacts within the Welsh Assembly Government, National Government, and European Parliament, and this means that not only do we keep key decision-makers up to date with our proposed activities, but also that we never miss an opportunity to impact on policy.

Cyfartal's main focus over the last two years has been to combat discrimination for those who feel they are excluded from training or employment opportunities. Involving individuals with diverse needs, and allowing them to take part in instigating change, has been the most positive aspect of the project.

While improvements have been made, there are still many areas that need further action which are:

- **Skills shortages that affect nearly one third of employers in Wales.**
- **High levels of dependency on incapacity benefits within some of our most deprived communities across North-East Wales.**
- **Lack of access for the disabled, and poor understanding of what the disabled can offer an employer.**
- **Poor understanding of the needs and cultural differences of ethnic minorities.**
- **Restricted opportunities for Welsh speakers or language training.**
- **Lack of access to child- or dependant-care.**

We will continue to develop and implement activities to address these, and many other, challenges across North-East Wales. These programmes and initiatives, with the on-going support of our partners, will make an important difference to policies in Education, Training, and Employment not just in Wales, but throughout Great Britain and Europe.

case study

job centre plus

Issue: Fear of Benefits Agency & improving perceptions.

Since joining the partnership in early 2003, Job Centre Plus has shown great enthusiasm for Cyfartal's efforts to tackle discrimination in relation to employment.

The concept of the Job Centre Forum evolved from a meeting of the Development Partnership Board; Ted Pinch, Deputy District Manager representing Job Centre Plus, listened to the concerns of residents from some of our more disadvantaged estates and suggested discussions to organise an event that would bring clients and advisors together. The result was The Job Centre Forum, which allows us to raise awareness of issues facing customers using the services provided by Job Centre Plus.

So far, issues highlighted by customers and advisors within both the forum and focus groups have included:

- **External and internal communication with customers at all levels within the organisation.**
- **The need for additional training to help change the perceptions and attitudes of staff.**
- **Specific skills training on Human Rights, Discrimination Acts etc.**
- **How to deal with aggressive situations.**
- **Addressing inconsistency in information supplied to customers.**

“the result is The Job Centre Forum.....bringing clients and advisors together...”

jobcentreplus



The following initiatives are being developed to address these issues, all of which can be addressed at district level:

- West Rhyl Young People's Project is producing a 'Customer Service' video to help Job Centre Plus address some of the training issues highlighted by the forum. The video will focus on customers' perceptions of Job Centre Plus and raise awareness of the diverse needs of individuals, as well as highlighting improvements in any areas of negative perceptions and attitudes of staff toward their customers. This video will be completed by March 2005.
- Beneficiaries of the Cyfartal programme are conducting a parallel mystery shopper survey to compare experiences; this will be assessed through the Job Centre Forum and will be taking place during March 2004.
- We are developing a tool to help counter-staff overcome the fear of intimidation by customers who may suffer from dyslexia, disabilities etc. This would take the form of an A5 flip-pad containing symbols for literacy problems, disabilities etc. It would be used at the beginning of a consultation to overcome any difficulties for the customer. To be piloted autumn 2004, subject to match funding availability.

National policy change would be needed to overcome the following issues, again highlighted by the forum and focus groups:

- **Support for customers suffering from Mental Health issues, and the removal of declarations in applications for certain types of employment.**
- **National mail-shots can be intimidating – specifically in areas relating to mental health.**
- **Job Centre Plus branding needs to be more sensitive to those with long terms of unemployment or sickness.**

case study

airbus uk



AIRBUS

Airbus UK and Cyfartal are working towards eliminating discrimination in the workplace by conducting a pilot (no pun intended!) study at Airbus UK's site at Broughton, Flintshire. This will attempt to change the attitudes and perceptions of employers (including SME's) and thus overcome discrimination in the workplace. The results of this unique, in-depth study will then be communicated via local and regional employer liaison groups, and dissemination events in Wales, UK, and Europe.

The Pilot

In partnership with Airbus UK's Human Resource department, Cyfartal have been developing ways to improve employees' poor perception, and implementation, of management policies. These activities will also try to reduce the current high level of absenteeism through sickness at the Broughton site, and promote retention of that most valuable of resources - people. Internally produced statistics seem to show that mental health issues affect a high proportion of those on sick leave and that there may be a direct link to the implementation of Airbus' own policies. Retaining employees has a vital economic and social impact on the surrounding communities of Airbus UK, acting as a preventative measure against the negative impact of economic inactivity.

Airbus project – how will it work?

Focus Groups - Trades Unions, Senior Management, Middle Management, White Collar, Blue Collar. Members will represent those who have had: no sick leave, short-term sick leave, long-term sick leave.

Steering Group - One representative from each of the five focus groups. The steering Group will meet at the beginning and end of the project.

Timetable - Two 2-hour sessions with each focus group – four extra with both the Trades Unions and Senior management. The eighteen sessions will be held two a day, one day a week for nine weeks.

Findings from this study will be available from Autumn 2004. If you would like further details, please contact the Cyfartal co-ordinator:

Following this initial study we hope to continue working with Airbus and focus on changing the perception of engineering and manufacturing that parents and teachers of the prospective local workforce hold.

education

As can be seen in the Airbus UK case study, those who influence young people's decisions on which career path to follow may need to improve their perceptions of engineering and manufacturing industries.

Cyfartal, Airbus UK, Wrexham County Borough Council, and Flintshire County Council have been working closely together to see how best to influence both parents and teachers of a prospective young local workforce and encourage more young people to make the most of the many exciting employment opportunities within these industries in North East Wales.

Cyfartal's Education and Training Group has been set up to research the following areas.

- **Retention rates.**
- **Comparisons of grant-assisted and non-assisted training programmes for disadvantaged groups.**
- **Attendance levels for 14-19 yr-olds in these programmes.**

This work is in very early stages of development, and we are hopeful that ELWa will match-fund the study over the next twelve months.

Partners involved include

Yale College
Deeside College
Llysfasi
ELWa

Llandrillo College
Welsh College of Horticulture
NEWI

All findings will be published and dissemination events planned to target education policy in Wales, UK, and Europe.



transnational

A transnational partnership - 'P@rson' - has been formed as an essential element of the Equal programme - promoting the transfer of knowledge and best practice between Equal partnerships and between member states i.e. Spain, Italy, UK, and Portugal. This includes identifying common activities that could be developed and implemented on a Europe-wide basis. Our transnational partners include three in Italy, one in Spain and one in Portugal:

- *Parcas - Spain (secretariat)*
- *U2 Coach - Teramo, Italy*
- *Sonar - Novara, Italy*
- *Point - Rome, Italy*
- *NovasAgriculturas NovasOportunidades - Portugal*

Sharing the results of innovative actions carried out by partnerships at national level will provide added value for policy development at both national and European levels; it includes the creation of a document to support the work undertaken by the new professional profiles to share good practice.

www.redparson.org

The Job Centre Forum model has been identified within this Partnership as an easily transferable model of good practice; our transnational partners in Rome are assessing the feasibility of adopting the model within their region.



Over the last 2 years we have held quarterly conferences in each of the countries to keep abreast of the work programme, and we are currently in production of a CD-Rom to highlight the work of the partnership, both locally and internationally. In addition:

- *We evaluate the 'National Action Plans for Employment, 2001' in relation to social, economic, and legal policies.*
- *We are creating a list of indicators for the social occupational quality certification. This elementary list will take into account each country's own peculiarities, thereby making it more useful as a development tool.*
- *We are working to produce an expanded standardised protocol relating to social, workforce, and rehabilitation guidance.*
- *We continue to work on 'Enterprise Empowerment'.*

Our Technical Secretariat is based in Badajoz Spain - contact details are:
Equal Community Initiative, C/Godofredo Ortega y Muñoz nº4 06011 Badajoz
tel: +34 924200069 fax: +34 924200550

We are also involved in local policies with:

- European Employment Strategy*
- National Action Plan for Employment.*
- UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2002-03 'Access to Employment'*
- Welsh Assembly Government's Skills and Employment Action Plan '2002'*
- Disability Discrimination Act*
- National Economic Development Strategy*
- National Childcare Strategy*
- Other agencies such as Local Authorities, Health Authorities, Careers Companies, Further & Higher Education Establishments, and Many, Many More!!*