

Women Into Work: Moving On

Internal Evaluation Report

Gateshead Women's Service

A Stonham Project

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Prepared by: Anne Robinson

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In 2001, SOVA and partners came together to secure funding from the European Social Fund EQUAL programme for the Development Partnership (DP) called Women Into Work. In EQUAL Round 1 the partnership was commissioned to work towards combating discrimination and inequality experienced by women facing disadvantage, particularly as a result of their contact with the Criminal Justice System. The ultimate goal of the programme, lasting until November 2005, was to ensure that these women could work towards gaining access to and sustaining appropriate employment, training or education. An extensive peer research project was undertaken so as to identify the support needs of disadvantaged women and, based on the findings, five Pilot Projects were commissioned to provide such support.

Members of the this Development Partnership, along with a number of new partners, used the research and piloting work carried out during EQUAL Round 1 to identify further innovative approaches for development and testing under EQUAL Round 2. It was proposed that these approaches would continue to increase the employability and empowerment of women disadvantaged in the labour market in line with the work started by the Women into Work programme during Round 1. Money was accordingly secured from Equal to carry this work forward into Round 2.

The new Development Partnership was called Women into Work: Moving On and fell under the remit of Theme A of the EQUAL funding stream - 'Barriers to Employment'. Its key objective has been to pilot innovative and holistic support packages to enable disadvantaged women to move from disempowerment to empowerment in the labour market.

EQUAL programmes are organised and funded in three separate phases:

- Action 1 - the set-up phase
- Action 2 - the delivery phase, during which joint or complementary initiatives or activities are developed in the UK and in Europe
- Action 3 - mainstreaming policies and disseminating successful initiatives.

All three phases are expected to incorporate the five Equal principles of

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunities
- Transnational Co-operation
- Dissemination and Mainstreaming

This Evaluation

This report is an evaluation of the Gateshead Women's Service, which is one of seven pilot projects commissioned to run during Action 2. Action 2 was originally due to run from 1 July 2005 to December 2006, but in practice has run from March 2006 to 31 May 2007, with a further extension for the project until 31 July. The project has been operational for a little over 10 months.

The aim of Gateshead Women's Service is to offer flexible and holistic services to women who are currently experiencing or fleeing domestic violence, with a view to enabling women to overcome problems and to achieve greater independence through education training or employment.

This evaluation will assess the project processes, performance against key outcome targets and the extent to which the five leading Equal principles have been incorporated into the project work.

Summary of Evaluation Findings

This evaluation has shown that the Gateshead Women's Service is a credible provision that offers a flexible, holistic service to women experiencing or fleeing domestic violence. It has developed good partnership links with

relevant agencies and a varied range of intervention, both in one to one and group contexts. It has, however, suffered a negative impact from the reduced timescales in Action 2.

The fact that the project has been based in an existing women's refuge has provided easy access to a pool of potential referrals, but the turnover of residents was insufficient to guarantee that the project would meet beneficiary targets. A relatively slow start did create a sense of panic in relation to referrals, but had positive benefits in allowing developmental time and liaison with other agencies. Referrals were subsequently sought from former residents of the refuge and from other agencies, and it was found that women once settled in their own accommodation were more ready to engage with working towards ETE goals.

The project has worked to empower women by providing information, offering support and enabling women to overcome barriers. It has taken an innovative approach, but has been stronger in relation to the empowerment principle than innovation. There has been participation in transnational work and women have been enabled to participate in meetings of the Equal/Sova Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisory Group.

Key Strengths

- the service offered is flexible and holistic
- staff are committed and skilled
- a variety of interventions have been offered, both individually and in groups
- staff consulted with women and arranged courses accordingly
- there are good links with partners in relation to ETE and benefits
- staff have worked hard to assist women in meeting childcare needs
- there has been good provision of advice

Difficulties or Barriers

- motivation amongst beneficiaries was variable and this had a negative impact upon participation

- other concerns such as housing and childcare were more of a priority for women
- some women move from the refuge very quickly
- the reduced Action 2 timescale created pressures in terms of reaching target numbers and did not allow sufficient time fully to explore the optimum point at which to engage women in ETE related work
- the project, being based in the refuge, was not seen as sufficiently distinct from refuge provision, and this may have been compounded by a line management relationship for the project worker through the refuge rather than through Equal
- some women are reluctant to come/come back to the refuge

Items to Consider for Future Projects

- a longer timescale is required to develop effective working practices and partnership relationships
- the timing of intervention is critical, and this project indicates that most appropriate timing is when women are relatively settled, rather than when they have just entered the refuge or are at the point of being rehoused
- childcare and concerns re dependent children appear to be significant issues for this beneficiary group and interventions need to pay attention to these concerns
- safe but dedicated premises would be helpful in establishing a distinct project identity
- given the multiple needs of this beneficiary group, goals related to employability and self-development have been shown to be more appropriate than those more directly related to employment or education
- this project has demonstrated that it is possible to raise the profile and possibilities around ETE within a type of service whose main focus by its very nature tends to be elsewhere. In this regard it could be seen to work against a potential tendency to pathologise women subject to domestic violence and to resist the dependency culture.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Introduction to Women into Work: Moving On

In 2001, SOVA and partners¹ came together to secure funding from the European Social Fund EQUAL programme for the Development Partnership (DP) called Women Into Work. In EQUAL Round 1 the partnership was commissioned to work towards combating discrimination and inequality experienced by women facing disadvantage, particularly as a result of their contact with the Criminal Justice System. The ultimate goal of the programme, lasting until November 2005, was to ensure that these women could work towards gaining access to and sustaining appropriate employment, training or education. In order to achieve this goal an extensive peer research project was undertaken² so as to identify the support needs of disadvantaged women and, based on the findings, five Pilot Projects were commissioned³ to provide such support.

Members of the this Development Partnership, along with a number of new partners⁴, used the research and piloting work carried out during EQUAL Round 1 to identify further innovative approaches for development and testing under EQUAL Round 2. It was proposed that these approaches would continue to increase the employability and empowerment of women disadvantaged in the labour market in line with the work started by the Women into Work programme during Round 1.

¹ Addaction, CAST (Creative and Supportive Trust), Department for Education and Skills (Offender Learning and Skills Unit), Home Office (Women's Policy Team), Job Centre Plus, London Probation Area, NACRO, National Probation Directorate, Prince's Trust, Prison Service, Sheffield Hallam University, Stonham Housing Association

² O'Keeffe, C. (2003) Moving Mountains: Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Employment, Training and Education from the Voices of Women (Ex)Offenders. SHU Press.

³ 'The Network Club' - Creative and Supportive Trust
Creative Business Pilot - London College of Communications and HMP East Sutton Park
'Going Straight to Work' - NACRO

'Norfolk Women into Employment and Training' - Women's Employment Training and Enterprise Unit; Peer Mentoring Support and Resettlement Pilot' - SOVA

⁴ Business In Prisons, CAST, Incredit Ltd, NACRO, NOMS, Positively Women, Prison Service, Red Kite Learning, Sheffield Hallam University, Southside Partnership, SOVA, Stonham Housing, Tribal Education (Cambridge Training and Development Ltd), West Yorkshire Family Mediation Service.

Thus in June 2004, SOVA, on behalf of the Women Into Work (WiW) Development Partnership, bid for and subsequently secured additional monies from EQUAL Round 2 in order to build on the successes of the partnership work already achieved and to expand activities with new partners. The new Development Partnership was called Women into Work: Moving On and fell under the remit of Theme A of the EQUAL funding stream - 'Barriers to Employment'.

The key objective of Women into Work: Moving On was to pilot innovative and holistic support packages to enable disadvantaged women to move from disempowerment to empowerment in the labour market. The target group included women:

- in contact with the CJS/on resettlement from prison
- involved in the sex industry
- experiencing homelessness
- with health issues
- subject to domestic violence or abuse
- from ethnic minority groups.

EQUAL programmes are organised and funded in three separate phases:

- Action1 - the set-up phase
- Action 2 - the delivery phase, during which joint or complementary initiatives or activities are developed in the UK and in Europe
- Action 3 - mainstreaming policies and disseminating successful initiatives.

Additionally, EQUAL programmes have five leading principles which are incorporated throughout Actions 1, 2 and 3. These are:

- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunities
- Transnational Co-operation
- Dissemination and Mainstreaming

Action One of the programme has been evaluated elsewhere. During Action Two, proposals for innovative Pilot Projects were sought through the tendering and commissioning process in order to provide new delivery models which could promote access to the labour market for groups of women who are traditionally excluded or discriminated against. As a result of the due tendering and commissioning process, seven Pilot Projects were set up under Women Into Work: Moving On.

This report provides an evaluation of one of these Pilot Projects - The Gateshead Women's Service.

1.2 Start up Issues and Problems

It is important to note that during the first phase of the evaluation of Action 2 there have been some major changes to the Moving On Programme. These changes have obviously had implications for progress with the programme. The background for these changes is described below.

During Action 1 of Women into Work: Moving On the partnership sought clarification from ECOTEC (the GB Equal Support Unit) that the large proportion of match funding in kind committed by one partner was eligible. This was agreed in principle, and the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) was approved, but SOVA, the lead DP organisation, still felt uncertain about the extent to which some of the proposed match activity fit with the DPA objectives and within the work plan. At the start of Action 2, in conjunction with the main match funding partner, SOVA reviewed and restructured the planned match activity, eliminating that which was not suitable. This was a lengthy exercise and resulted in a reduction in the overall budget of the DPA, with attempts to source other match funding being unsuccessful. A Significant Change was submitted to the DWP via ECOTEC and a revised DPA was approved. Some of the key impacts have included the disbandment of the Beneficiary Support Forum in its original framework along with a reduction in the overall size and scope of the programme. For example, not all partners were providing their own match funding and so some could not be allocated Equal ESF funding as originally intended. These changes

inevitably had a negative impact on some members and delayed the start-up of the remaining pilot projects service delivery.

Action 2 of Women Into Work: Moving On was due to run between July 2005 and December 2006, thus allowing a period of approximately 18 months for pilot projects to operate. Initial proposals were put forward for consideration by the Development Partnership in the summer of 2005, the original tender document for the Gateshead Women's Service being signed on 6 May 2005.

Following the process of re-negotiating match-funding details above, a Clarification Document, outlining new levels of funding, beneficiary targets and project activity, was issued in March 2006. At this point Stonham started the set up phase of the project, despite on-going uncertainty about eventual funding/match-funding and continuing negotiations about the ultimate scope and remit of the project. The end date for Action 2 was extended to 31 May 2007, and a subsequent extension moved the end date further to 31 July 2007, allowing the project approximately 10 months of operational time.

A manager for this project and the sister project, The Durham Mental Health Service, came into post in late August 2006 via an agency, and was joined early in September by a project worker. Because of the reduced timescale, there was pressure to start beneficiary work immediately and referrals to the project were accepted from mid-September 2006.

Further negotiations, however, were still taking place between SOVA and Stonham, resulting in the production of a Service Specific Contract in September 2006. It is the target figures from this Service Specific Contract that have been used in this evaluation in order to assess performance, although elsewhere reference has been made as appropriate to both the original tender of May 2005 and the Clarification Document of March 2006.

The implications of these delays for both the outputs and outcomes of this project have been further outlined in Chapter 4 of this report, but briefly involve a limited consideration of referral strategies at the outset, pressure to build up number of beneficiaries over a relatively short period, a tension

between reaching targets and delivering quality interventions, and concerns about appropriate on-going sources of support for women involved with the project as it ends.

CHAPTER 2 - THE EVALUATION

2.1 The Evaluation Structure

Two evaluations in relation to Women into Work: Moving On were commissioned, the External Evaluation and the Internal Evaluation. The External Evaluation (conducted by the Centre for Public Policy at Northumbria University) was designed to examine the *overall effectiveness* of the WIW:MO Development Partnership (DP) and whether the partnership achieved its *strategic objectives*. The Internal Evaluation (as detailed in this report) was designed to examine the *specific achievements* of Pilot Projects and whether they have achieved their *performance objectives*. So, in summary, the External Evaluation was concerned with the '*overarching strategic goals*' of the WIW:MO Development Partnership whereas the Internal Evaluation was concerned with the '*nuts and bolts*' of Pilot Project activity.

2.2 Overall Aim of the Internal Evaluation

- To provide a rigorous and 'user friendly' assessment of the extent to which Women into Work: Moving On projects have met their objectives (incorporating the Equal principles of innovation and empowerment)⁵

2.3 Objectives of the Internal Evaluation

- To provide information on the progress made towards objectives as outlined in Service Specific Contract Schedules
- To identify what worked well and what did not work so well (in terms of both what was done (outputs) and how it was done (processes))
- To provide information on the extent to which Pilot Projects have met the needs of the target group
- To recommend improvements to working practices with disadvantaged women and outline models of good practice thus assisting with mainstreaming and dissemination.

⁵ The other EQUAL principles of equal opportunities, transnational co-operation and dissemination and mainstreaming are explored in the External Evaluation being conducted by Northumbria University

In addition to the above a key objective of the evaluation was to respond to the specific questions around holistic working which were outlined in the evaluation specification.

2.4 Type of Evaluation

The evaluation incorporated both formative⁶ and summative⁷ elements. The formative element employed mainly qualitative methods and involved a process evaluation which allowed for an understanding of the critical factors and mechanisms that shaped the delivery and outcomes of the Women Into Work: Moving On Pilot Projects. The process evaluation was valuable in helping to understand what worked, for whom and why.

The summative element employed mainly quantitative methods in order to assess the outcomes of projects. This part of the evaluation is concerned with the project's overall effectiveness.

The evaluation was conducted in consultation and co-operation with the Women into Work: Moving On DP. In particular, the WIW:MO DP were responsible for monitoring beneficiary information.

2.5 Evaluation Questions

The formative element of the evaluation focussed upon the following questions:

- What have been the main successes of Pilot Projects?
- What have been the main problems encountered by Pilot Projects?
What steps have been taken to address such problems?
- What are the organisational processes which have supported/hindered achievement of Pilot Project objectives?
- To what extent have worked in partnership with already established services? To what extent/how is partnership working kept high on the agenda – what level/type of dialogue is achieved?

⁶ A type of process evaluation for the purpose of new programmes or services that focuses on collecting data on programme operations

⁷ A type of outcome evaluation that assesses the results or outcomes of a program. This type of evaluation is concerned with a program's overall effectiveness

- To what extent were beneficiaries able to contribute to the design of the work programmes and products? To what extent has a sense of ownership of projects been achieved among beneficiaries?
- In what ways have Pilot Projects benefited the target group?
- In what ways has women's quality of life improved as a result of involvement in Pilot Projects?

In addition the following questions were addressed, specifically around holistic working practices:

- How did projects define/understand the term 'holistic approach'?
- To what extent was a holistic approach to the needs of disadvantaged women adopted by Pilot Projects?
- What factors need to be in place to facilitate a truly holistic approach (i.e. appropriate referral systems, shared agendas, building effective partnerships, peer approaches)?
- To what extent does a holistic approach increase employability?

The summative element of the evaluation focussed upon the following questions:

- What are the primary activities which the projects have been engaged in?
- Have the projects met their targets of beneficiaries engaged? Did the Pilot Projects attract a range of beneficiaries?
- How many women have entered Education /Training/Employment as a result of their involvement in the Pilot Project?
- What level of 'drop out' have the Pilot Projects encountered?

2.6 Empowering Evaluation Strategies

In line with the ethos of all EQUAL work Evaluation staff conducted an evaluation which was as empowering for participants as possible and aimed at improving practice and fostering self determination of participants. In adopting this approach to evaluating strategies, it was possible to empower individual beneficiaries to self identify and assess the quality of their own experience of the project. In line with the ethos of the EQUAL programme, this evaluation recognises the value of 'soft outcomes' (i.e. increases in beneficiaries self

confidence, self esteem, motivation etc) as well as 'hard outcomes' (i.e. achieving qualifications and getting into work).

2.7 Methodology

As previously mentioned, the evaluation included both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These included the following:-

- Analysis of project documentation including:
 - Minutes/Notes of meetings
 - Terms of Reference
 - Recruitment/publicity material
 - Documents/diagrams relating to project structure
 - Any other documents which reflect work conducted

The following information sources were also used:

- Pilot Project progress reports
- Analysis of beneficiary records, including individual learning plans
- Observation of Pilot Project activities
- Analysis of data collected from Registration, Destination and Soft Outcomes forms

2.8 Fieldwork Conducted

In addition, in depth semi structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted, as detailed below:

Project Role	No. of Interviews	Time point
Equal Project Manager	1	April 2007
Project Worker	2	December 2006, April 2007
Refuge Manager	1	December 2006
Beneficiaries	2	December 2006
Beneficiaries	5	April 2007 NB additional interviews had been arranged for the two project visits during April but beneficiaries did not attend.

CHAPTER 3 – THE PROJECT

3.1 Project Information/Details

Project Title: Gateshead Women's Service
Timescales: 1 March 2006 to 31 May 2007 (subsequently extended to 31 July 2007)
Location: Gateshead

Funds allocated to Project: £72, 880

The following sections are intended to inform the reader of the original intentions of the Pilot Projects. The information is sourced from the tender documents which were submitted at the commissioning stage and also the Service Specific Contract Schedules drawn up by SOVA and agreed by Partner Providers.

3.2 Rationale

The service was intended to complement the work of an existing Stonham service in Gateshead, which provides accommodation and support to women at risk or fleeing from domestic violence.

The rationale was based on the findings presented in the research study, *Moving Mountains* (O'Keeffe 2003), which originated from Women Into Work Round 1. Additional reference was made in the tender documents to tackling local issues identified in the local authority strategies relating to domestic violence and homelessness.

Statistics from Stonham projects indicated a high demand for this type of service. Of 421 women referred to the Gateshead refuge, only 6% were engaged in employment activities, rising to only 9% on departure.

3.3 Objectives

Key objectives are to:

- establish an employment focussed service for women supported by the Gateshead Women's Service
- develop an information resource for women victim's of domestic violence/abuse on topics that will aid their access to employment related activities
- provide beneficiaries with a range of opportunities to improve their employability and life skills, to aid their personal development and to measure their progress
- provide service users with a range of childcare resources to enable women to participate in employment, training, education and related activities
- support beneficiaries in progressing into a variety of positive progression opportunities, including further education, courses and government programmes
- to embody Equal principles in all areas of provision:
 - partnership working
 - innovation
 - equal opportunities
 - trans-national co-operation
 - empowerment
 - mainstreaming

3.4 Partners

Whilst the original tender documents outlined a proposed partnership with Red Kite Learning aimed at developing an innovative IT resource for women relating to their ETE needs, this did not appear in the renegotiated project activities in the final Service specific Schedules.

More local informal partnerships were developed with the following:

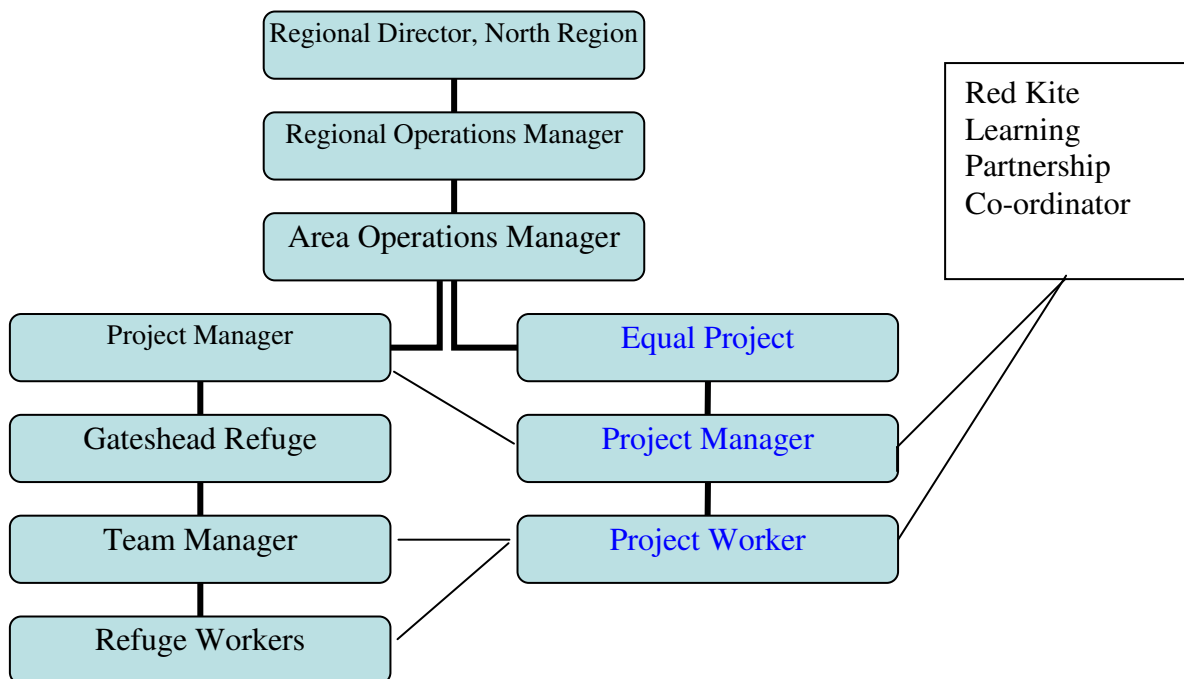
- Gateshead MBC
- Gateshead College
- Job Centre Plus
- Connexions

- BTCV
- Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council
- The Princes Trust
- The Shaw Trust
- Surestart
- local family centres
- Parent line Plus
- Victim Support

A range of other organisations were contracted to deliver courses or services, the most popular being Top Marks Driving School, and work was also conducted with providers of adult education services.

3.5 Management/Project Structure (taken from tender documents)

Management of the project is shared between the Equal project manager and the refuge team manager, who has line management responsibility for the project worker.



3.6 Target Group

Women who are victims of domestic abuse/violence who are accessing support from the Gateshead Women's Service, either in the refuge or in the community.

The original intention was to accept referrals from the Gateshead refuge, another Stonham facility, but this was subsequently expanded and referrals ex-residents of the refuge who had left before the Equal project began, some of whom were receiving tenancy support services from Stonham.

CHAPTER 4 – TARGET GROUP RESULTS

4.1 Beneficiary Profile

4.1.1 Number of beneficiaries participating over the lifetime of the project

Status	Target Set	Actual Number
Unemployed or not active in the labour market	20	20
Employed	0	0
Other* (incl ex-offenders)	0	0
Total	20	20

4.1.2 Qualifications

Beneficiaries gaining qualifications	Target Set	Actual Number
Below NVQ 1	0	0
NVQ 1 or equivalent	0	0
NVQ 2 or equivalent	0	0
NVQ3 or equivalent	0	0
NVQ4 or equivalent	0	0
NVQ5 or equivalent	0	0
Other	0	0
Beneficiaries undertaking non-accredited self-development activities provided by Stonham	17	14 (taken from project attendance records)
Total	17	15

4.1.3 ETE Outcomes

What will happen to beneficiaries following their involvement in the project activities?

Status	Target Set	Actual Number
Full-time employment	0	0
Part-Time employment	0	0
Self-employment	0	0
Voluntary work	0	1
Further education, training	1	0
Government programmes e.g. New Deal	1	2
Unemployment	17	0
Other**	0	0
Not known	1	0
Total	20	3
** Please state	Long term sickness/incapacity	

4.1.4 Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Beneficiaries
White-British	18
White-Irish	0
White-Other	0
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	0
Mixed-White and Black African	0
Mixed-White and Asian	0
Mixed-Other	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0
Asian or Asian British - Other	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1

Black or Black British – African	0
Black or Black British – Other	0
Chinese	0
Other**	1
Not Known	0
Totals	20

4.1.5 Disability

Out of the 20, 2 women had physical disabilities, 1 had learning difficulties and 5 were receiving support for emotional well being

4.1.6 Age

Age	Beneficiaries
Under 16	1
16-18	2
19-25	2
26-49	14
50-65	1
65+	0
Totals	20

4.1.7 Background

Background	Beneficiaries
Homeless	5
Ex-offender	2
Asylum Seeker	2
Drug/alcohol misuser	2
Domestic abuse	20
In custody	1
Lone parent	16
Person with caring	2

responsibility	
Currently seeking employment	2
Aged over 50	1

4.2 Activity Plan Results

The table attached at Appendix 1 provides a 'snapshot' of the extent to which original objectives of the project, as outlined in the Service Specific Contract Schedules have been achieved. The project was required to ground their objectives in the Principles of EQUAL (innovation, empowerment, equal opportunities, transnationality, dissemination and mainstreaming). These themes were required to inform and guide all aspects of programme delivery. The theme applicable to each objective is detailed in the second column of the table.

In the next chapter there also follows more detailed information on successes and also barriers to achievement which arose from in depth interviews with project staff. This data proved vital in understanding process issues and outlines the critical factors and mechanisms that shaped the delivery and outcomes of the Women into Work: Moving On Pilot Projects. The qualitative data collected and presented also provides evidence on the extent to which the themes were incorporated.

CHAPTER 5 - DECONSTRUCTING THE PROJECT PROCESSES

This section draws upon a thematic framework analysis of interview data in order to explore further the process of project delivery, successes encountered, barriers and how these have been/have not been overcome.

This analysis provides:

- a comprehensive mapping of issues uppermost in the minds of stakeholders as the project progressed
- evidence of good practice in the work of the programme and identification of where improvements could be made to encourage reflection on and re-conceptualisation of current thinking and practice

The issues identified are not grounded in arbitrary external judgments but are firmly grounded in the data collected during the course of the evaluation.

5.1 Mapping Project Activity

The project aimed to deliver a range of services and interventions, both in group and one to one settings. In order to do so, the partners outlined above were engaged and additional liaison was undertaken as appropriate with social services and other support agencies or providers. This was frequently in relation to childcare or education, reflecting the fact that the majority of beneficiaries had caring responsibilities which were to them of primary importance.

5.2 Group Activities and Courses

Group activities included

- a trip to Gateshead College (December 2006)
- Indian head massage and pamper session (November 2006)
- community/personal safety (April 2007)
- employment information session (April 2007)
- volunteer introduction session (November 2006)
- information session with Parentline Plus (June 2007)
- further courses on First Aid, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and IT

Despite informal consultation with the women and a more explicit 'Equal Ideas Session' in December 2006, attendance was an issue at most of these events. This was experienced in the course of this evaluation when a planned observation of a group session could not go ahead due to cancellation of the event. The reasons for poor participation in structured activities is explored in the following sections but, briefly, engagement was affected by the other priorities for the women in terms of their children, emotional state or perhaps rehousing. This raises important questions about the appropriate timing and focus of intervention to be discussed later.

5.3 Individual Interventions

Interviews with beneficiaries and a review of case files indicated that a wide range of support had been offered on an individual basis, including information, advocacy and onward referral. Appointments and interviews were facilitated and it was clear that the Equal worker took a broad approach to her brief and was flexible in the issues to which she would respond. It should be noted, however, that this was a beneficiary group that seemed to appreciate practical assistance and contacts, rather than on-going emotional support.

5.4 EQUAL/SOVA Activities

Whilst the flexible and holistic nature of the Equal intervention contributed towards the empowerment of the women involved, so to did the engagement with elements of the SOVA Equal programme, such as the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisory Group (EODAG) and the celebration day held in Sheffield on 10 May 2007. Two beneficiaries, one from this project and one from the Gateshead Women's Project, also travelled to London in November 2006 to be filmed for a 'talking heads' video.

A transnational event was also held in June 2007 in the North East which was attended by Equal staff and beneficiaries. In addition project staff participated in two seminars of the Symposium on Women, Human Rights and Prostitution.

5.5 Participation in the Project

Participation in the project was described by the project worker as 'mixed' with some women engaging well over a period of time and others proving much more difficult to involve. This has resulted in some anxieties about meeting target numbers for the project, exacerbated by the delay in establishing staff in post and offering the service. The Equal project manager did, however, indicate that this may have had a positive effect in allowing for more liaison with potential partner agencies in the initial stages.

5.6 Recruitment

The project aimed to involve 20 women in its lifetime, but built up these numbers slowly. The original intention was to work with women in the Stonham refuge provision and the project has been based at the refuge to facilitate women's access to the Equal service. However, it quickly became clear that this was problematic as the turnover of residents at the refuge could be quite slow, so that an adequate number of referrals could not be guaranteed. In addition, some women entering the refuge either do not want to look at education or employment or are not ready to do so. Further complications arise regarding a minority of women whose stay in the refuge is short for whatever reason. In three of the nine case files surveyed women had moved out of the refuge before any meaningful work had taken place. Whilst these three did subsequently count towards the target of 20, they do indicate some of the volatility and instability inherent in working within the domestic violence sphere.

At the time of the second and third project visits in April 2007, the number of referrals had risen to 18, because of a decision to expand the referral sources and active work contacting former refuge residents either directly or through the Stonham tenancy support service. One further referral had been made following a visit by the project worker to a women's group. No referrals had been received from the local authority's domestic violence unit, although in principle these would have been accepted. Publicity was circulated to encourage self-referral also and an information session was held at the local college, publicising the service.

This widening of the referral net is significant as it was an explicit response, not just to the need to reach target numbers, but also an early recognition that women typically need a degree of stability before they are ready to turn their attention to tackling education or employment. Periods of relative instability when women have recently entered the refuge or are preparing for a planned move out were found not to be the optimum times for engagement, whilst women settled in the refuge or in their own accommodation were felt on the whole to be more receptive.

Referrals from the refuge tended to be facilitated by the refuge staff, each of whom acts as link worker for 2 of the six residents. They ensure that new entrants to the refuge are made aware of the Equal project and are encouraged to join if appropriate. They therefore act as an important gateway to the service, although residents are able to make contact with the project worker independently by virtue of her presence around the refuge and also because of her occasional role as relief worker.

It is worth noting that the staffing structure of the refuge does not currently allow for outreach work, so the support offered to ex-residents is limited beyond the week of their move. To some extent, therefore, the Equal project has filled this gap and has demonstrated the usefulness of offering a more on-going support service for women leaving the refuge. It was not clear from this evaluation but this may have contributed to the broad nature of support and interventions offered by the Equal worker and the extent of engagement with outside agencies or facilities. It may also have resulted in a lack of clarity for refuge residents about the separate nature of the project. One interviewee, for instance, did not recognise the name of Equal and regarded the project worker as part of the refuge. Another remarked that

"it's a useful addition to what the refuge offers - gives you opportunities - not everyone will want them but some will be ready" (Beneficiary).

Similarly from a Stonham perspective:

"I think she is looked at as being on the Equal project but because she is there and does do relief work, not only the staff but also the residents look upon her as part of the refuge staff" (Equal Project Manager).

A brief word about the beneficiary profile is appropriate here also. There were few beneficiaries in the upper and lower age ranges, 14 of the 20 being between 26 and 49 years of age, presumably reflecting the age profile of women in contact with the refuge. 16 of these women were lone parents. The impact of this upon engagement with the project is discussed below, but clearly, after experience of domestic violence, this was the key defining characteristic of this beneficiary group.

5.7 Engagement

As indicated above engagement has been variable, despite efforts to consult with the women and provide the activities and courses they request. Disappointment was expressed at the number of times that courses or events had been arranged with very poor response, however, it was noted that

"You can't force somebody to take something up just because it is free and its there and its on the doorstep and you have to accept that people, for whatever reason, can't be bothered, that people don't always feel that they need more money, what they need is time and space" (Equal Project Manager).

The activities that proved popular were the advice session with Parentline (5 participants), the group visit to Gateshead College (5 participants) and Community Safety (4 participants), whilst the employment advice and introduction to volunteering sessions attracted only two attendees each. This may reflect the main concerns of the women around childcare and personal safety. It should be noted, however, that evaluation feedback from the women was positive across the board and that other benefits accrued from bringing agencies together for the Employment Information Session in terms

of joint working and a focus on the needs of a group of women that for these agencies is consistently hard to reach.

Individual women in their interviews talked of their motivations for joining the project, which varied considerably. Some were quite focused on college courses and future plans ("*I just want to go to college, make something of my life*"), whilst others had broader aims about social inclusion. One woman said that

"It gets people out into the community and meeting people, because when people come to a place like this (a refuge) they don't know people, they don't know the area" (Beneficiary).

Confidence or lack of confidence was a theme throughout most of the beneficiary interviews and they expressed appreciation of the support that the project had given. For one woman it was the encouragement to move forwards expressed when she said "*It's just getting started.....*" whilst for another "*It is the push that I needed.*"

The helpful and flexible approach of the project worker was also seen as a positive, and she has been willing to meet women at their homes or at other venues of their choice. The personality and skills of this particular worker have been a significant factor in engagement:

"She is pleasant and approachable, very supportive - I have never felt uncomfortable about telling her things" (Beneficiary).

5.8 Barriers to Engagement

The main factors that were felt to contribute to lack of engagement were:

- the needs of children being more of a priority for the women
- childcare
- the reluctance of some women to go to/come back to the refuge
- lack of separate space for the project and consequent lack of separate identity

- other more pressing problems for the women, such as substance use or dealing with trauma
- lack of confidence
- lack of motivation
- other priorities, such as (re) housing

The first and last of these appeared to be uppermost in the minds of the beneficiaries interviewed, who by virtue of their commitment to the project over a period of time were mainly well motivated to make progress. The other perceptions derived from interviews with project staff.

A high percentage of this particular beneficiary group have dependent children - for instance, five of the nine case files reviewed indicated childcare needs. As noted in previous sections, data supplied by SOVA indicates that 16 of the 20 beneficiaries were lone parents. The perception of project staff and the women themselves was that the needs of the children are priority:

"The first thing women say is that they want to be happy with their childcare" (Project Worker).

This appeared to be especially the case when children had suffered disruption as a result of domestic violence and/or a move into the refuge, and also where social services or issues relating to care and custody of children were involved.

A significant amount of project worker time was spent on childcare and/or educational issues, for instance, enabling women to apply for nursery places, to access after-school provision or to find new schools for their children after a move to a new area. Individual Learning Plans also indicated that the project worker took individual women to visit nurseries, sought support for one woman whose child had special educational needs, gave information about parenting courses and enabled one woman to progress plans to register for an NVQ in childcare. In relation to courses organised, project publicity was not available for the majority of these but, where it was, it clearly showed that childcare had been arranged and this is consistent with information from interviews.

It was clear from interviews with both beneficiaries and staff that moving on from the refuge was a major preoccupation and that often pursuing goals relating to ETE would be put on hold during the period around a move. This did result in a loss of focus for the Equal work for some women, but it was evident from reading case files that relationships were maintained and the work would resume at a point where the beneficiary felt ready to engage again. The short-term nature of the project was an issue, and a view was expressed about the need to develop a support and intervention mechanism over a longer timescale:

"Once they've got somewhere to live and they've moved out, they've got to decorate their home, they've got this to do, that to do.....so a lot of it is still looking at things..... I think its only when they get to a certain point that they think 'alright then, I would not mind being fifty pence or a pound a week worse off just to get out and meet some other people to talk to' and its having the confidence about being able to talk to other people as well or be in the workplace if they haven't worked for a long time" (Equal Project Manager).

There was some speculation in the staff interviews about lack of participation, particularly in the light of consistent efforts to provide interventions and courses requested by the women. It was suggested that for women who may previously have had very little control over their own lives, the ability to choose to take part or not is significant, particularly upon entering the refuge and having to go through a range of compulsory bureaucratic processes; signing up to Equal is one extra they can opt out of. Significantly also, there was a thought that some of the resistance from the women may be a response to perceived coercion - albeit gentle! - to get back into education or work too soon after possibly quite traumatic experiences.

5.9 Equal Principles

A specific requirement of the Equal projects is the incorporation of the Equal principles into project design and implementation, these principles being:

- partnership working

- innovation
- equal opportunities
- trans-national co-operation
- empowerment
- mainstreaming

The two principles most significant for these evaluations are empowerment and innovation.

5.10 Empowerment

In looking at how the project has empowered its beneficiaries, it is useful first to highlight the aims around empowerment as expressed in the clarification document of March 2006.

Promoting Individual Empowerment

The project will work in a manner that enables service users to consider opportunities to reach their chosen goals, improve their circumstances and aid successful participation within society. To enable this to occur a great deal of importance will be placed on empowerment, enabling them to make informed decisions, taking control of their lives and encouraging them to be involved in taking responsibility for their own life choices. Within all the projects work anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice will be promoted.

Developing Collective Responsibility and Capacity for Action

All service users will be encouraged to participate or feed into group activities, which are aimed at developing support networks and promoting equality for women. This will include the provision of a weekly service user group meeting, including service user representation within any stakeholder meetings and holding group work sessions covering a range of relevant topics.

It is evident from case files and interviews with beneficiaries that they are encouraged to identify their own goals and to make choices about priorities and ways of progressing towards their goals. The variety of different items

featuring in Individual Learning Plans indicates that programmes of work are individually tailored. These have included such activities as visits to a riding stable, driving lessons/assistance with driving theory test and courses with Tyneside Women's Health. One woman commented that

"They've given me the strength to carry on. I'm so excited tonight because I've been to MIND today. It's something to look forward to and such a boost. It's just nice to feel that you are doing something. And a major hope.....because it can be so depressing up here" (Beneficiary).

Access to information and to courses was also seen as empowering:

"The different courses she can give you access to is unbelievable"
(Beneficiary)

As was the encouragement and support:

"If she hadn't been with us, I'd have left it for now" (Beneficiary).

Childcare is a priority and access to good childcare to allow the women to concentrate for brief periods on their own needs was seen as important. The project worker explained this as:

"We'll always sort out childcare for any courses, but also it's good for kids to get into childcare and for mum to realise that is OK."

Similarly her manager expressed the view that:

"There is an opportunity for childcare to give a bit more empowerment to the women that are on the sign up because they can be somewhere if they need to be without panicking over it, without having to find the money for themselves" (Equal Project Manager)

Another aspect of the project worker's role has been ensuring that women have access to accurate welfare benefits advice, in order to maximise income

but also to help them make informed choices about studying or employment and the implications for their income. This has been done both through advice and advocacy from the project worker and referral to specialist advisers such as the lone parent advisers and the Shaw Trust. The benefits of partnership were described by the project worker:

"It's in terms of the amount of focus I put on networking because there are areas where I can identify and meet their needs and I can do that really well, but if I stopped at that and said 'well, you could do with that but we'll just move onto what I can provide' then that's just putting another barrier in front of them and our whole role is to get rid of those barriers. So if we say 'right, for your literacy we can do this and that' and give them different options, so we say this is how you can tackle it so when you are ready come back to me and we can set up some appointments" (Equal Project Worker).

Evidence of developing collective responsibility and capacity for action is more equivocal, despite attempts to involve the women in devising programmes of activities and identifying courses they might need. As the project has developed through referrals from outside the refuge, the potential for working with a distinct group of women and using the group dynamic as a means of empowerment has been limited. Whilst women have engaged in group activities and courses, the content of courses has seemed to be more significant for participants than the group process. Community Safety sessions have had the effect of increasing confidence, Food Hygiene courses have enabled participants to seek work in catering, as two instances. To some extent this means that the collective voice of women influencing the range of interventions has been more muted than originally hoped and, specifically, structures such as the service user group have not been developed.

On the theme of collective voices, however, some beneficiaries did participate in meetings of the Equal/ SOVA Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisory Group (EODAG) and three women from the project took part in the EODAG Showcase in Sheffield on 10m May 2007.

5.11 Innovation

Whilst the Clarification Documents and Service Specific Schedules make no specific reference to innovation, the original tender documents illustrates that the project will be innovatory in two ways:

- by providing an innovative approach to engaging disadvantaged women fleeing domestic violence in activities, which both helps them to deal with their crisis situation and to develop their employability skills
- by using the latest technological devices as tools to engage and develop service user skills, including using a range of equipment including laptop computers, PDAs etc

In the process of renegotiating the original project proposals and agreeing the reduced activity outlined in the two later documents, the potential partnership with Red Kite Learning was abandoned and so the areas outlined in this second bullet point have not formed part of actual project activity.

The project has been innovative in terms of its holistic and inclusive approach, adopting flexible ways of working and being prepared to respond to a wide range of barriers experienced by this beneficiary group. However, a careful assessment of the evaluation evidence suggests that it has performed more strongly in relation to the empowerment principle than innovation. This may be a result of the reduced timescale for the project and the difficulties in initial recruitments, which have left a more limited time towards the end of the project in which to try out new approaches with a relatively committed group of women.

The project worker discussed the extent of innovation in the following terms:

"It's innovative in that women can be offered support on a lot of things, based on ETE but a wide variety of interventions can be related to that"
(Equal Project Worker).

Two other aspects of the service are worth highlighting in terms of innovation. The first of these is the emphasis on increasing employability. Whilst much of the work has contributed indirectly rather than directly to employability, it has

raised the profile and possibilities around ETE within a type of service whose main focus by its very nature tends to be elsewhere. In this regard it could be seen to work against a potential tendency to pathologise women subject to domestic violence and to resist the dependency culture.

The other aspect to note is the way that the project has attempted to accommodate and respond to women's priorities and specifically parental responsibilities and childcare. It has done this by provision of childcare, assisting women in accessing nursery, school and after-school provision and by being willing to, for instance, actively search for college courses or employment that could fit around school hours. Whilst this is offered by other services, it may not be such a focus of work as it has been for this Equal project, which has orientated itself significantly around provision for children as a means of securing women's engagement but also enabling them to concentrate on their own needs and aspirations.

5.12 Brief Discussion of Other Principles

Reference has already been made to project activities that involve partnerships and joint working with other agencies, some new and some building on pre-existing relationships with the refuge. Such partnerships have increased the scope of the interventions available and the specialist services or advice that could be accessed. There is also a benefit to the other agencies in terms of raising awareness of the needs of this beneficiary group and challenging them to find ways of reaching out to these women. The extent to which this has happened has not been tested as part of this evaluation but indications from the project worker are that there has been some impact on other agencies.

Such impacts are part of mainstreaming activity, although they may have happened as a by-product of day to day project work. Similarly, the awareness and practice around ETE issues amongst refuge staff has increased and as the project ends they will be left with valuable contacts and a body of information about courses, volunteering opportunities and other provision locally.

Whilst this type of mainstreaming is taking place, there was less evidence of more explicit mainstreaming activities or influence on strategic agendas. However, the main thrust of mainstreaming activity is due to happen in Phase 3 of the Equal programme and so will become a focus of later activity.

Transnational co-operation has also been limited although the projects did participate in a transnational event in the North East on 14 June 2007. This was after the period of data collection for this evaluation and so it is not possible to comment on that event other than to say that it featured a comparison of attitudes towards domestic violence in other European jurisdictions and examples of provision.

The final Equal principle is Equal Opportunities and this was evidenced by the project in terms of its activities aimed at overcoming barriers and opening doors for women. This principle also relates to the internal employment practices of Stonham and their adherence to their corporate Equal Opportunities procedures. No concerns were raised in this regard in the course of this evaluation.

CHAPTER 6 - IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

6.1 Hard Outcomes

The data provided centrally by SOVA indicates that two women have entered government programmes and one has gone on to voluntary work. The project has therefore exceeded these two targets. No woman is recorded as having gone on to further education, but looking at courses and options in local colleges has been part of the work undertaken with a number of the beneficiaries, thereby sowing seeds and raising possibilities that women may well pursue at a later date.

Although not featuring in the data from SOVA, two beneficiaries were interviewed for this evaluation who were in part time employment, so the measurable impact of the project may be somewhat greater than the raw figures suggest.

6.2 Analysis of Soft Outcome Questionnaires

An outline of how the self-defined progress made by beneficiaries would be measured is contained in the Clarification Document of March 2006, and is copied below. A specific 'soft outcomes tool' has been developed by Stonham in the form of a questionnaire completed by the women at key stages in their involvement in the project and this section was intended to highlight the key findings from analysis of these questionnaires.

Regrettably, at the time of writing this data is not available. It is imperative that SOVA/Stonham do examine and analyse the findings of these questionnaires, as they give indication of progress in a number of areas.

A range of "soft outcomes" will be monitored including Service User perception of how they have developed in terms of self-confidence, assertiveness, social circumstance, educational and skills for life.

The "distance travelled" will be monitored via Stoneham's support planning process. This will involve assessing needs, weekly link-working sessions and progress reviewing on a monthly basis. All this intervention will be recorded in individual Service Users files. Growing confidence and independence of service users in achieving own goals and becoming less dependent on the service and on statutory support. Self-assessment monitored in support plans. Group work sessions will have learning objectives.

A brief explanation of the soft outcomes assessments should indicate the usefulness of this information. There are two questionnaires to be completed by beneficiaries and two by practitioners.

The first questionnaire relates to the following areas:

- communication
- confidence
- motivation
- team work
- autonomy

Whilst the second questionnaire focuses upon:

- problem-solving
- work-related values
- self-esteem
- coping with pressure
- positive attitude

Beneficiaries complete these questionnaires at the beginning and end of their involvement with the project and at intermediary points, depending on the length of their intervention. Each of the ten areas listed above is scored from 1-5, according to beneficiary responses to the questions. Comparison of the

initial questionnaire scores with subsequent scores gives an indication of 'distance travelled'. A similar process is followed for the practitioner questionnaires.

6.3 Analysis of ILPs, Progress Reports and Women's Perceptions

Altogether 15 ILPs and progress sheets were examined, either during case file reviews or accessed through SOVA. These showed a variety of targets in the ILPs relating to women's circumstances. Childcare featured in a number of targets or was noted as a practical consideration that needed to be dealt with in order to pursue goals. Confidence and confidence-building was also a theme throughout.

Goals included practical assistance with, for instance, driving, accessing information about courses and finding childcare. However, other goals related more to emotional and personal support, and the area around confidence-building fell into this category.

The overall aim of work and subsidiary goals were spelt out clearly. Progress and participation in some cases was also evident from the progress reports. But in others, the level of engagement was less clear. In at least two cases, work towards goals had been affected by moving house and in three cases work was terminated early after the beneficiary left the refuge. In other instances, however, the activity noted in the progress reports was broader than was outlined in the ILP because women had apparently decided to take advantage of courses and other group activities made available to them.

Few goals directly related to finding full time employment, but women appeared keen to use opportunities for self-development. This reflects the aims and targets set for the project which were more focused on personal growth and increasing employability than tangible results in terms of finding employment or entering further education.

Beneficiaries interviewed for the evaluation were positive about their involvement with the project. Some had noted an immediate benefit and talked about the support and information they had received, as well as courses

attended. There was a sense from some that the benefits might only be evident more long-term, but that the project had set them thinking about their own needs and aspirations.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Results

This evaluation has shown that the Gateshead Women's Service is a credible provision that offers a flexible, holistic service to women experiencing or fleeing domestic violence. It has developed good partnership links with relevant agencies and a varied range of intervention, both in one to one and group contexts. It has, however, suffered a negative impact from the reduced timescales in Action 2.

The fact that the project has been based in an existing women's refuge has provided easy access to a pool of potential referrals, but the turnover of residents was insufficient to guarantee that the project would meet beneficiary targets. A relatively slow start did create a sense of panic in relation to referrals, but had positive benefits in allowing developmental time and liaison with other agencies. Referrals were subsequently sought from former residents of the refuge and from other agencies, and it was found that women once settled in their own accommodation were more ready to engage with working towards ETE goals.

The project has worked to empower women by providing information, offering support and enabling women to overcome barriers. It has taken an innovative approach, but has been stronger in relation to the empowerment principle than innovation. There has been participation in transnational work and women have been enabled to participate in meetings of the Equal/Sova Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisory Group.

7.2 Key Strengths

- the service offered is flexible and holistic
- staff are committed and skilled
- a variety of interventions have been offered, both individually and in groups

- staff consulted with women and arranged courses accordingly
- there are good links with partners in relation to ETE and benefits
- staff have worked hard to assist women in meeting childcare needs
- there has been good provision of advice

7.3 Difficulties or Barriers

- motivation amongst beneficiaries was variable and this had a negative impact upon participation
- other concerns such as housing and childcare were more of a priority for women in the refuge
- some women move from the refuge very quickly
- the reduced Action 2 timescale created pressures in terms of reaching target numbers and did not allow sufficient time fully to explore the optimum point at which to engage women in ETE related work
- the project, being based in the refuge, was not seen as sufficiently distinct from refuge provision, and this may have been compounded by a line management relationship for the project worker through the refuge rather than through Equal
- some women are reluctant to come/come back to the refuge

7.4 Items to Consider for Future Projects

- a longer timescale is required to develop effective working practices and partnership relationships
- the timing of intervention is critical, and this project indicates that most appropriate timing is when women are relatively settled, rather than when they have just entered the refuge or are at the point of being rehoused
- childcare and concerns re dependent children appear to be significant issues for this beneficiary group and interventions need to pay attention to these concerns
- safe but dedicated premises would be helpful in establishing a distinct project identity
- given the multiple needs of this beneficiary group, goals related to employability and self-development have been shown to be more

appropriate than those more directly related to employment or education

- this project has demonstrated that it is possible to raise the profile and possibilities around ETE within a type of service whose main focus by its very nature tends to be elsewhere. In this regard it could be seen to work against a potential tendency to pathologise women subject to domestic violence and to resist the dependency culture.

APPENDIX 1 - ACTIVITY PLAN RESULTS

NB The shaded areas in this table are administrative requirements which do not relate to the Equal themes

Activities	EQUAL Theme	Evidence of Achievements/Barriers to Achievements
Prepare an Implementation plan and submit this to the SOVA Women Into Work Programme Manager or Programme Director		
Recruit staff for the project as identified in the project budget, ensuring they have the necessary skills and experience to undertake their job descriptions to a high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equal project manager in post from August 2006 ○ Project worker in post September 2006 ○ Delays in recruitment and project start up have created pressures in terms of meeting targets
Plan and co-ordinate a referral route and process to the project worker from the Gateshead Women's Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a referral route has been established via the refuge staff link worker roles ○ referral routes were subsequently expanded to include ex-refuge residents and others receiving support around domestic violence issues
Accept eligible referrals to become beneficiaries from Stonham's Gateshead Women's Services in order to enable women who are victims of domestic abuse/violence to access employment focussed support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ innovation ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ initial referrals were accepted from the refuge ○ contact was made by letter with appropriate ex-refuge residents ○ referrals sought from other agencies - although these appear to be a small proportion of the total ○ small number of self-referrals accepted

<p>Undertake an initial assessment of need and negotiate an individual plan with each beneficiary setting SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound), recording all information on the prescribed enrolment form and Individual Learning Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidenced in case files and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) ○ ILPs demonstrate realistic goals and activities ○ Soft Outcomes forms are completed at the initial stage and were on most case files examined
<p>Undertake a recorded and systematic induction with each beneficiary, which must include Health and Safety, domestic issues, the responsibilities of the beneficiary, the responsibilities of Stonham Gateshead Women's Services, complaints procedure etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidence on case files which contain a comprehensive range of induction information, including a complaints policy ○ the above paperwork was not signed by beneficiaries in all cases
<p>Plan and coordinate with staff in the Gateshead Women's Service to establish a range of interventions delivered on an individual and group basis to develop life and employability skills. Learning outcomes for interventions must be devised (what the intervention will achieve)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ innovation ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a range of individual interventions were evident from case files and ILPs ○ attendance sheets and limited other documentary evidence was available on group activities and courses ○ activities included a group trip to Gateshead College and information day involving a range of ETE-related agencies ○ participation in interventions was less than anticipated, with beneficiaries prioritising childcare and other immediate needs
<p>A session plan for any training must be devised with the learning outcomes made clear, and it must be clear how the trainer/supervisor will assess the understanding and progress of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this level of recorded detail was not investigated in this evaluation

beneficiaries against session learning outcomes		
Refer beneficiaries to appropriate progression opportunities in the community including, but not exclusively, full and part time employment, voluntary work, further and higher education and training, government programmes etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidenced in case files and ILPs ○ In many cases beneficiaries needed to sort out practicalities re childcare and housing before referrals could be realistically made ○ Consideration was given to a range of developmental opportunities including volunteering, short courses and accessing sports facilities ○ beneficiaries were variable in the level of motivation to follow through initial plans
Provide beneficiaries with appropriate support to enable them to achieve their ILP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ innovation ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ range of support measures offered, including transport and accompanied visits ○ childcare arranged for courses to increase participation ○ focus of work in some ILPs around accessing childcare in the community
Provide information and guidance on education, training and employment, sign posting to appropriate specialist provision where necessary within the community e.g. for literacy/numeracy tuition and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equal Opportunities ➤ partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information resources available in the refuge ○ further information accessed electronically ○ information accessed via computers in local libraries and community facilities ○ referrals to other agencies evidenced in case files ○ partner agencies contributed to events such as the Volunteer Introduction Day and the Employment Information Session.
Assess and formally record the progress of individual beneficiaries, seeking and recording the opinion of the beneficiary about their own perception of their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ progress reports were on case files ○ from the case file reviews, beneficiary views seemed to be included implicitly rather than explicitly

progress		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ use of Soft Outcomes Questionnaires does reflect both practitioner and beneficiary views
Assist and support beneficiaries in attending the Development Partnership, sub group meetings and transnational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beneficiaries have attended meetings of the Equal/SOVA Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisory Group (EODAG) ○ 3 beneficiaries participated in the EODAG Showcase event in May 2007 ○ the project was involved in a transnational event in the North East in June 2007 ○ Project staff attended seminars of the Symposium on Women, Human Rights and Prostitution
Plan and establish a New Information Service that will provide beneficiaries with an accessible range of information on such topics as employment / education / training, child-care provision, skills for life, local support networks, health and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment ➤ Equal Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information collated and available at the refuge for use by link workers after the project has ended
Record and evidence any activity that assists beneficiaries to re-establish positive links with their family and friends, and encourage and support them in accessing local support networks and being socially included with their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidenced on a minority of case files ○ family work was more focused on immediate needs re children and childcare ○ beneficiaries were encouraged to use local facilities and to access local social groups, and this was particularly relevant for those women who had been re-housed from the refuge
Attain feedback from beneficiaries on a regular basis: immediately after assessment and ILP development, whilst attending the project and as the beneficiary leaves (where possible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidenced through soft outcomes forms
Comply with the requests for information		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidenced on case files

and attend interview with the DP evaluator, Northumbria University Centre for Public Policy and the traineeship evaluator, Sheffield Hallam University, as reasonable		
Ensure beneficiaries sign and date an attendance sheet each time they meet with a staff member or undertake training, showing the time they have attended, why they have attended. A staff signature must also be included		
Report all complaints and compliments to the Women into Work moving on Programme director, as detailed in this contract		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project has accommodated requests for evaluation visits
Complete and submit monthly Claim Forms, detailing all outputs, outcomes, expenditure and activity during the month, both for match funding and ESF funding. These must be submitted to the SOVA Women into Work office as described in the Partner Provider Support Manual. Beneficiaries should be monitored for up to six months after they have left the programme in order to justify positive outcomes		
Undertake the annual Self Assessment Process with the support of SOVA Women into Work: Moving On Staff, preparing a Self Assessment Report and then a Development Plan		

Produce a Closure Report at the end of the project in line with ESF and SOVA requirements		○ Not available at the time of writing
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APPENDIX 2 - STAFF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview format for project managers/staff

April 2007

NB This represents the basic range of question used but these were varied according to project and worker role.

- 1 Please describe how the work of the project has developed over its lifetime?
- 2 What have been the challenges in working with this group of women and to what extent have these been addressed?
- 3 From an organisational perspective, what has helped or hindered the work of the project?
- 4 Describe the range of activities covered by the project.
- 5 Describe some of the ways that you work with the women and how this might differ from other services they receive.
- 6 The project set out to provide a holistic service for women, what does a holistic approach mean to you? To what extent has it been achieved for the women?
- 7 Can you comment on the sources of referrals and any issues with referrals.
- 8 What have been the main positives in relationships with other agencies or providers? And any negatives?
- 9 Can you comment specifically on relationships with other mental health providers?
- 10 How effective do you feel the work has been in enabling women to move on and out of the project?
- 11 Do you feel the project has been successful about meeting the objectives or outcomes identified in plans for individual women?
- 12 One of the Equal themes relates to empowerment, in what ways has the project worked to empower individual women?
- 13 What next now that the project is coming to a close?
- 14 Do you have a sense of any longer term impact on service provision – what important lessons or messages have been/ can be passed on to other services?

APPENDIX 3 - BENEFICIARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview format

Beneficiaries

April 2007

Name How long on project?

1. What types of activities have you been involved with through the project?
2. What is the best thing about being involved?
3. Is there anything that is not helpful or does not work in the project?
Anything that could be improved?
4. How much say do you feel you have had in planning your activities?
5. Have you been able to have a say about how the service develops and what activities it offers?
6. What would you like to get out of the project? What do you need in order for that to happen?
7. Do you think you have changed in any way through your involvement in the project?
8. What impact, if any, has the project had upon other areas of your life?
9. How would you describe the project to other women who might benefit from using it?
10. What do you think should happen now that the project is about to finish?