



case study

environmental sustainability



Objective One is part-financed by the European Union



The Objective One Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

JOBCENTRE PLUS

Elizabeth House
Castle Street
Truro
TR1 3AP
Telephone: 01872 354127

the project

Jobcentre Plus has invested in many projects via co-financing with the European Social Fund. Such projects include Connexions' NEET fund, Enable, Tap Routes to Employment, Cornwall Youth Service, Truronian Training, Real Base Training, Working Woodlands, LOPS, Lizard Pathways, Pentreath Industries, North Cornwall Works, Cornwall 24, Headroom and Neighbourhood Pathways. Some of these are environmental case studies in their own right.

The Programme has invested £7,896,380 from the European Social Fund (ESF) in the project which has a total cost of £18,638,897.



Single parent Linda McErlain is fulfilling her ambition to be a bus driver through Jobcentre Plus's Truronian Training scheme

Liskeard Jobcentre Plus won the national Environmental Office award in 1996.

measures of environmental sustainability adopted

To promote the prudent use of natural resources

National targets have been developed across the civil service and Jobcentre Plus contributes to these in a number of ways. A large proportion of the office waste is recycled including confidential waste, cardboard, newspapers and toner cartridges. The centralisation of stationery ordering and subsequent removal of stationery cupboards has eradicated the huge wastage caused by over ordering leading to stationery becoming obsolete and out-of-date before it can be used. Paper waste is further minimised through new touchscreen systems at the jobcentres and the facility to claim by phone, by using printers which double-side, using multi-use internal envelopes and reusing scrap paper. Resources are also shared e.g. a library exchange has been set up between the St Austell and Truro offices. Energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are also monitored and kept in check through simple office systems such as setting photocopiers to automatically go to standby when not in use, encouraging staff to use the most energy efficient photocopiers for bulk work, only using the dishwasher on full load once a week and requiring cleaning contractors to switch off all lights when the building is empty.

To protect and improve the environment

The offices have developed travel plans mapping

where people live and work to identify opportunities for lift share and the use of sustainable modes of transport. Cycling is encouraged through the Pedal Back the Years project and it may be possible in the future to supply LPG vehicles for work travel. The Civil Service procurement policy gives equal weighting to environmental sustainability and issues of cost therefore any contracts set up must be in line with this. Jobcentre Plus require contractors to have similar environmental standards to itself and if this is not the case the contractors are supported in adopting such an approach.

To take advantage of the business opportunities afforded by growing demands for environmental goods, processes and services

Service level agreements with office support contractors require certain environmental management systems to be offered and/or used by the contractors as part of the tendering criteria. The New Deal Environmental Task Force provides unemployed people with the opportunity to gain work experience in the environment sector.

To increase awareness of residents, businesses and visitors of the value and importance of the environment

Each office elects an environmental champion to draw up an improvement action plan and keep on top of the identified environmental priorities. The offices also compete for the national green award and set themselves challenges to deal with any weaknesses in their environmental practices. Posters are produced



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outlining the benefits of environmental good practice and the systems which are in place in the offices. Detailed information about progress is given at briefing sessions to make staff aware of how we are scoring against other regions. Good practice is shared at the regional forum where environmental champions get together to discuss successes, difficulties and opportunities for the future.

benefits of environmental sustainability

Jobcentre Plus see an inherent financial sense in carefully managing resource use and the impact on the environment caused by its operations and has experienced considerable cost savings as a result of its environmental practices. And the less money which is spent on running costs, the more can be spent on programmes and services.

The job training provided in the environmental sector improves employability, increases choice available to unemployed people, and supports this growth sector as well as providing environmental benefits. Jobcentre Plus see the environmental sector as one offering lots of opportunities for employment directly and indirectly and allows a person to progress with a traditional vocational route without necessarily needing formal qualifications. Also the placements with the environment sector raises awareness of environmental issues amongst those who take part. Awards applied for by Jobcentre Plus to demonstrate its good practice across the full breadth of its work now generally include environmental sustainability within their assessment criteria for instance as with Investors in Excellence and Charter Mark analysis.

Also there is a social expectation that public sector organisations should set high standards and achieve maximum efficiencies and benefits. The centralised ordering of stationery helps to monitor procurement better and prevents errors as forms are current and correct.

It is evident that transport is viewed as a barrier to work by jobseekers and employers; through the implementation of Jobcentre Plus's own travel plans and work with individual projects such as West Cornwall Rural Transport Partnership and Lizard Pathways (which find solutions to customers' transport problems) JCP can encourage by leading by example as well as meeting their own targets of decreasing pollution. Other benefits to JCP include reduced staff travel expenses and lessened need for car parking spaces.

Overall by acting sustainably JCP has learnt from its own experience and is able to raise awareness



Jobcentre Plus's Real Base project has helped young people like Dave to find a future away from crime

amongst customers. And this helps improve the competitiveness of employers worked with as it helps businesses to respond to demand from abroad for environmental goods and services.

In summary the economic benefits created through the adoption of environmental sustainability measures include cost savings, support for the employment within the environmental sector, customer satisfaction and public opinion approval, and the removal of barriers to employment.

lessons learnt

Andy Brelsford, former External Relations Manager for Jobcentre Plus says:

"Generally public bodies are expected to be as resource efficient as possible but we want to go beyond this. Cornwall's JCP would like to be one of the top districts and an exemplar for environmental sustainability.

"Environmental sustainability has to be a culture within the organisation if it is to be instilled in customers too; people should be thinking about why they're doing it. We've found that setting challenging targets and structuring projects so they can meet the challenges has really worked. And staff are keen to get involved and even to volunteer to be environmental champions."

For more information about how you can incorporate environmental sustainability into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.