



Centre for Full Employment (CFFE)

Background

Founded in 1982 as Sheffield Co-ordinating Centre Against Unemployment (SCCAU), the organisation offered welfare rights and advice in order to help maintain people on benefits. In 1997 a shift in political impetus enabled CFFE to develop routes out of unemployment, and towards social and economic inclusion.

Based in Sheffield CFFE now offers, through its Jobnet brand, a unique free service designed to improve the job opportunities available to residents in some of the region's most disadvantaged areas. The organisation also supports businesses with their recruitment needs.

Responding to a need

In 1997 there were 20,120 unemployed claimants in Sheffield. CFFE's priority was to find ways of helping them into employment. In response, CFFE developed the largest intermediate labour market (ILM) programme in England. It became the first organisation to successfully link Jobcentre Plus, SRB and European funding. ILM worked by giving long term unemployed people a job for up to 1 year. The result enabled individuals to develop new skills, work experience, and a reference.

In 2002, working in partnership with a range of voluntary and community organisations, CFFE developed the Jobnet network of local community recruitment agencies. Jobnet is a response to the current labour market and the difficulties employers have in attracting new recruits. The need here was for an approach that engaged with economically inactive residents who were unable to access much of the support offered by Jobcentre Plus mainstream programmes (e.g. those on incapacity benefit; lone parents; adults returning to full-time employment). There were 33,200 incapacity benefit claimants and lone parents in Sheffield in 2007 (10.4% of the total working age population), and this number had not significantly altered since 2000. Many economically inactive residents live in the most deprived wards in Sheffield and Jobnet contributes to both community economic development and social/economic inclusion.



PROFILE IN BRIEF

Centre for Full Employment (CFFE)

Services offered:

- Recruitment support to Sheffield employers
- Job entry support and skills development to workless residents of Sheffield.
- Fund management of European and domestic regeneration monies across South Yorkshire.
- Project development in partnership with strategic and local organisations
- Labour market research and intelligence.

Who do you work with?

Businesses and key public sector agencies in South Yorkshire.

Examples include: The Pier (Retail), First Buses and NHS. Workless residents of Sheffield. Local community forums and associations; Voluntary and community sector employment related organisations.

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Engaging with businesses and the community

CFFE provides a dedicated service to employers, assisting them with overcoming their recruitment problems. At the same time the service enables disengaged community members to access work that maximises their career and earnings potential. On the one hand, employers are encouraged to consider workless residents as applicants, in recognition that people gain relevant skills through life as well as work. On the other, the project addresses the 'hireability' skills lacking in those who have been out of the labour market for protracted periods of time. This includes labour market awareness, confidence, jobsearch, interview and application skills. Jobnet has locations across Sheffield and services the most deprived communities in the city.

Amazing achievements

Since CFFE began developing active labour market approaches in 1997, the organisation has supported the engagement of 12,300 Sheffield residents, and over 4,500 of these have obtained a job as a result. During this period, we have managed over £48million of funding, the vast majority of which has been paid out as wages to ILM workers, and as payments to voluntary and community organisations delivering services. CFFE funding has for example supported over 70 employees within the Jobnet network for the past five years. CFFE is recognised by the City Council as making a positive contribution to reducing unemployment in the region, and the company's Jobnet model has been adopted as a key component in the Sheffield City Region Strategy for Work & Skills.

Alicia Lloyd, a partnership officer at CFFE said:

"One of the main strengths of the services offered by CFFE has been the organisations ability to engage with members of the public and local businesses. The JobNet service operates exclusively from areas of the city typically associated with high areas of unemployment and we are able to understand and empathise with the needs of people who are using the service.

"We are one of the longest serving organisations in the voluntary sector offering employment opportunities in the city. As a result of this long-standing commitment, we have successfully forged a strong working relationship with many businesses, meaning that we are able to offer individuals a diverse range of work opportunities".

Looking ahead

As well as continuing its support for Sheffield's employers and workless residents of the city CFFE is exploring the possibility of developing paid services as part of a route to sustainability. CFFE is also working closely with social housing providers to develop the range of services they can offer residents, again with the aim of reducing worklessness as our joint goal.

