

NORTHSIDE PARTNERSHIP

PRE-COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT COURSE

PILOT EVALUATION REPORT



**TRUENORTH**

*Strategic Marketing Leadership*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
BACKGROUND	5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	6
RESEARCH SUMMARY	7
ANALYSIS	11
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	13
APPENDIX 1: RESPONDENT BACKGROUNDS	15
APPENDIX 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW RESULTS	17
APPENDIX 3: PRE-CE TRAINING PROGRAMME	26

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Community Employment (CE) is an Active Employment Intervention and provides eligible unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary basis. CE helps long-term unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to a work routine and to assist them to enhance/develop both their technical and personal skills.

The Pre-Community Employment (Pre-CE) course provides intensive training in preparation for progression to CE. It was developed for clients who are long term unemployed or have never worked. Intended client benefits are improved self-esteem and ability to participate on CE or progression to mainstream employment. To date two pilot Pre-CE courses have been organised.

## Objective

The objective of this report is to present the evaluation of the two Pilot Pre-Community Employment (CE) courses conducted by the Northside Partnership.

The evaluation of the pilots aims to:

- Capture the experiences of participants and suggestions for future programmes
- To make policy recommendations based on discussions with project staff
- To track progression of representative group from the first pilot

## Research Methodology

Four respondents from each programme were chosen at random. Three members of the programme staff were also chosen for in-depth interviews. All respondents were interviewed as per an approved interview theme sheet. All interviews were conducted under the guidelines of the ICC/ESOMAR Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice.

## Research Summary

Participants' interviews are summarised as follows:

- Course had long-term positive impact on self-esteem
- STEPS is excellent
- All would recommend the course

Programme staff interviews are summarised as follows:

- Ultimate goal is employment
- STEPS provides intangible skills – confidence, self-esteem
- Other elements provide “how to” or tangible skills
- Follow up after pre-CE is important

## Analysis

Findings show that the pilot pre-CE courses have achieved the aims of the course developers providing a short and valuable experience with positive results.

The level of progression for those who complete the course is good and could be improved with minor policy changes.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The main conclusion is that the course achieves its aims and is a highly effective mechanism for progression.

The main recommendation is that the Northside CE Framework Committee implements a series of pre-CE programmes throughout 2006 so as to maintain momentum in the area. The Pre-CE should also be implemented across all partnerships.

In order to achieve an effective implementation, an experienced project team should set-up to develop and implement a project plan based upon the lessons learned by the Northside Partnership. This team should be overseen by the CE Framework Committee and deliver its plan early 2006.

The pre-CE course should be viewed as a high-impact, low cost and effective method of recruiting CE candidates and of screening most deserving CE cases.

# Background

In November 2002, the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed recommended the establishment of:

*“... pre-CE modules for potential Participants who would benefit from such modules. The main purpose of such modules would be to provide Participants with personal development opportunities and access to career path planning before commencing”*

(Source: Indecon International Economic Consultants, Review of Active Labour Market Programmes commissioned by Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment for the PPF Standing Committee on the Labour Market.)

The Northside CE Framework Committee and the Northside Local Employment Service team have identified a client-base who are long term unemployed and in some cases have never worked in the formal economy, who would benefit from participation on an intensive training programme in preparation for progression to CE.

The proposed pre-CE programme aims to respond to those needs by providing training that will focus on personal development, attitudinal change, teamwork and learning to work. The delivery of the training will be under the heading of workshops rather than training, as this will provide the client with the feeling of a relaxed atmosphere where people come together for the same goal, to progress.

This pre-CE programme aims to:

- Encourage participants to view change in a positive manner
- Create a forum where change and the management of change can be discussed and recognised as a positive way forward
- Provide the individual with the opportunity to assess their skill level
- Build confidence and developing a positive mental attitude
- Identify and outline participants concerns/expectations as they embark on this programme of activity
- Empower participants with the skills, knowledge confidence and tools required to effectively make their next step into CE which, in turn will lead to progression

# Research Methodology

## Respondents

A total of 11 respondents were interviewed - four from the first programme, four from the current programme and three programme staff. A complete overview of respondents can be found in Appendix 2. The names and positions are as follows:

### *Programme 1 – 4 respondents*

- 3 female, 1 male
- 2 lone parents
- 1 ex-drug misuser
- 1 disability allowance
- All referred by mediator

### *Programme 2 - 4 respondents*

- 3 female, 1 male
- 3 lone parents
- 1 disability benefit
- 3 referred by mediator, 1 self referred

### *Programme Staff*

- Carmel McPartlin
- Helen Smartt
- Christine Campbell

## In-depth interviews

As in-depth, one to one interviews were the agreed research instrument the first step was to develop a theme sheet for interviewing. This was presented to and approved by Northside Partnership.

In preparation for the interview all respondents were contacted by telephone and a face-to-face meeting was arranged. It should be noted that in two cases, a subsequent telephone interview was conducted.

Most interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes. Some lasted over an hour so as to encourage responses.

All interview notes were immediately read back to each respondent after the interview. Respondents were encouraged to add to or change the notes as they required. Respondents were then asked if the notes reflected their responses. All respondents verbally confirmed that this was the case.

All interviews were conducted under the guidelines of the ICC/ESOMAR Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice.

## Research summary

The complete notes from each interview can be reviewed in Appendix 2.

### Participants Interview Summary

- Most wanted to progress to CE, employment or further education
- Different goals but all positive
- All long-term unemployed
- Course had long-term positive impact on self-esteem
- STEPS is excellent
- Routine is not a problem
- All would recommend the course

Question	Summary
Why did you want to do the Pre-CE?	The main reasons are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry onto a CE scheme</li> <li>- Find a job</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Build confidence</li> <li>- Meet new people</li> </ul>
What did you hope to achieve?	The main ambitions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry onto a CE scheme</li> <li>- Find a job</li> <li>- Get into college</li> <li>- Set career goals</li> <li>- Build confidence</li> </ul>
How long is it since you last worked and why did you leave?	All have been out of mainstream unemployment for long periods of time. The reasons for leaving vary from ill health to changing work patterns. However, the vast majority never worked.
Did the course meet your expectations?	Yes in most cases. However, some participants had no expectations entering the course.
What did you like about the course?	STEPS is the most popular element. However, there is a solid fondness expressed for the other “how to” elements of the course.
What improvements would you suggest?	Most would suggest no improvements. The suggested improvements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current communications course is hard to understand due to speed of delivery</li> <li>- Increase use of AV presentations in “how to” element</li> <li>- Increase course duration</li> <li>- Develop elements like customer service</li> </ul>
What did you think of the STEPS programme?	Brilliant, very good and interesting, absolutely excellent. Adrienne and Veronica are great trainers

Has your outlook on life changed?	Yes
In what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More positive</li> <li>- Stronger</li> <li>- Improved confidence</li> <li>- Improved communication skills</li> <li>- Improved job hunting and interview skills</li> <li>- Improved on the job skills</li> </ul>
What part of the programme influenced you most?	STEPs
How did you manage with the change in your daily routine?	No real problems reported. All respondents were well motivated to attend.
Would you recommend the Pre-CE programme to a friend or family member?	Yes – and have started to do so.
Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All CE participants should do the pre-CE course</li> <li>- Course expectations should be communicated and managed</li> <li>- It should continue</li> <li>- It should be longer</li> <li>- It is a great incentive</li> <li>- Pre-CE can help a wide range of people with different skills and problems</li> </ul>

### Summary of Trainer, Coordinator, Mediator Interviews

- Ultimate goal is employment
- STEPS provides intangible skills – confidence, self-esteem
- Other elements provide “how to” or tangible skills
- Follow up after pre-CE is important

Question	Summary
Why do you think attracts participants to the Pre-CE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self esteem</li> <li>- A short, undaunting course</li> <li>- Evident value</li> </ul>
What do you think they want to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CE</li> <li>- Job</li> <li>- Further education or training</li> <li>- Career plan</li> <li>- Self esteem</li> </ul>
What are the benefits of the programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self esteem development</li> <li>- Practical job training</li> <li>- Attitudinal changes</li> <li>- Learning about boundaries and expectations</li> </ul>
Do you think that the course meets participants' expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes/Would like to think so</li> <li>- Expectations should be present if referral correctly done</li> </ul>
What do you think participants like about the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- STEPs</li> <li>- Financial gain</li> <li>- Opportunity to learn from each other</li> <li>- Routine brings a meaning</li> </ul>
What improvements do you think participants would suggest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manual handling training</li> <li>- More STEPs</li> <li>- More guest speakers</li> <li>- 9:15 or 9:30 start might be easier for mothers</li> </ul>
How do you think participants consider the STEPS programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All positive</li> <li>- Life changing and intense</li> <li>- Brilliant</li> </ul>
Do you think their outlook on life is changing or has changed?	Yes
In what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More faith in their own abilities, increased self worth</li> <li>- Increased independence and ability to go forward</li> <li>- Increased sense of responsibility</li> </ul>

<p>What part of the programme do you think influences participants most?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- STEPs</li> <li>- Less obvious would be the practical “how to” elements</li> </ul>
<p>How do you think participants manage with the change in their daily routine?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They learn to manage the routine</li> <li>- Course is a good stepping stone to full time commitment</li> </ul>
<p>Do you think participants will recommend the Pre-CE programme to a friend or family member?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Additional Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each group differs and there is a need to tailor and amend</li> <li>- Pre-CE could be a good recruiting ground for the CE and would also provide a proper screening process</li> <li>- CE entry process need transparency</li> <li>- Other partnerships have expressed an interest in the pre-CE course</li> </ul>

# Analysis

## Course performance against aims

The Pre-CE programme has a number of aims against which the findings have been checked with the following results.

- **Aim: Encourage participants to view change in a positive manner**

All respondents reported a positive change in outlook. Examples they provided include improvements in:

- Confidence
- Communication skills
- Job hunting and interview skills
- On-the job skills

- **Aim: Create a forum for positive change management**

The general tone of the evidence suggests that the course provided a solid and positive structure for change. This can be seen in such statements as:

- “[Before pre-CE] Some were in their shell but by the end [of the course] things were as smooth as silk.”
- “I talked about ideas and myself, consciousness and self-consciousness.”
- “People talking about my strengths...peer support.”

Also, Programme 1 participants meet informally to discuss their progress and to provide support. This is a continuation of the forum created by the course.

- **Aim: Provide the opportunity to assess individual skill level**

Evidence that this aim was achieved can be seen in such statements as:

- “I never realised that I had a goal and the course helped me describe it.”
- “Very practical advice on communicating and I am able to hold my own in a large group.”
- “Pre-CE can help a wide range of people with different skills and problems.”

- **Aim: Build confidence and develop a positive mental attitude**

As with the first aim there is solid evidence that this occurred. By way of illustration one respondent spoke about being able to converse with total strangers whereas before the course this would not have been possible due to a lack of confidence. Another spoke about how the course “is like turning a new page – starting afresh.”

- **Aim: Identify participants concerns/expectations on this programme**

This aim is achieved by the workshop nature of the course. The participants bring their own personalities and histories to the group and create with the guidance of the trainers a unique and positive learning environment. It is in this environment that their concerns and expectations are identified. Also, the STEPs element has been noted as a solid structural process for identifying concerns and managing them.

- **Empower participants to effectively make next step into CE or employment**

This aim was achieved as the following section on participant progression illustrates.

The specific evidence from the interviews supports the conclusion that these two pilots have met the aims of the pre-CE programme.

It is interesting to note that the programme staff respondents show a solid understanding of the courses aims and knowledge of client expectations and ambitions.

### **Participant progression**

From Programme 1 four out of the nine participants have progressed – a success rate of 44%. Two have found places on CE and two have got full time jobs.

In addition, all participant respondents spoke about progressing to CE, employment or college.

This is an encouraging trend and leads to the conclusion that the pre-CE assists in progression.

In the future it might be useful to measure the CE attrition rate for Pre-CE and Non-Pre-CE participants. At this stage it is suggested that Pre-CE participants will be less likely to drop out of the full CE programme and therefore financial savings may be made. More importantly valuable CE places can be targeted where they will have the most positive impact.

### **Suggested course changes to the programme**

The participant respondents suggest management changes as follows:

- Develop customer service elements
- Programme staff should closely manage after-course expectations
- Communications course was difficult to understand
- Introduce more AV into course

The programme staff respondents suggest management changes as follows:

- Solid teaching skills are a must. All trainers should speak slowly and clearly.
- Increase STEPs element
- More guest speakers
- Change start times to 9:15 or 9:30

Once again there is close alignment in views between clients and staff. As this is a pilot this is encouraging. One element that may need to be improved is how the course aims are communicated to clients. This is not a problem if they are referred but it might be worthwhile drafting a short “Course Aims” pocket brochure explaining how the course can be of benefit.

As the Pre-CE is designed to prepare participants for employment the suggested flexibility of start-times is not recommended.

### **Suggested policy changes to the programme**

The participant respondents suggest policy changes as follows:

- Pre-CE should automatically lead to full CE
- All CE should undergo the Pre-CE course

The programme staff respondents suggest policy changes as follows:

Pre-CE participants should automatically be provided with a CE position

- CE picking process is not transparent and may not be targeted at most deserving cases
- Pre-CE would be a very effective recruiting mechanism for CE
- Pre-CE would provide a transparent screening process

Policy suggestions centre on what happens after the Pre-CE course. A number of respondents have mentioned a sense of loss when the course ended. In simple terms a positive momentum is built up only to come to a dead stop. This should not be the case.

It is also recommended that mediators schedule a review appointment with their client within one week of the course completion. This appointment should be booked prior to commencing on the course.

It is recommended that the pre-CE become the primary recruitment and pre-screening activities for CE. Everyone who completes a pre-CE and wants to progress on to CE should be placed automatically. There will be cost benefits to doing this.

### **Summary of findings**

The pilot pre-CE courses have achieved the aims of the course developers providing a short and valuable experience with positive results.

The level of progression for those who complete the course is good. It would be even better if the suggested policy changes were implemented.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The evaluation of the pilot pre-CE courses has shown:

- The course achieves its aims
- It has significant impact on long term unemployed participants in a short time
- This impact is not limited to the participants as they share the course with their children, family and friends
- The participants are unanimously agreed about the value of this course and the changes it has made to their lives.

### **Recommendations**

One of the main recommendations is that the Northside CE Framework Committee implements a series of pre-CE programmes throughout 2006. These should be funded for the Northside Partnership area and will ensure that momentum is maintained.

In addition, it is also recommended that the pre-CE course be implemented across all partnerships as soon as possible and that the lessons learned by the Northside Partnership be used to develop an implementation roadmap.

In order to achieve this, an experienced project team should set-up to develop and implement a project plan early in 2006. This team should be overseen by the CE Framework Committee.

From a policy point of view, the pre-CE course should be viewed as a high-impact, low cost and effective method of recruiting CE candidates and of screening most deserving CE cases.

In the meantime a regular "pilot pre-CE alumni" meeting might be considered so as to keep the learning momentum going. Once a quarter might be sufficient for participants to meet and discuss progress.

Perhaps the greatest value of the pre-CE is to those who chose not to progress to CE after the pre-CE course. They will have learned that the CE may not have been the right path but they will have developed a career plan which will see them progress to employment or further education and the confidence to follow through.

# Appendix 1: Respondent Backgrounds

## Programme 1

Respondent 1

Current Position: Employed with Marks & Spencer

Pre CE Link: He was one of the participants who moved on into employment rather than an employment intervention scheme. He was referred in by his Mediator, is 37 years old and was in receipt of unemployment assistance.

Respondent 2

Current Position: Beginning CE on 5th December 2005 with Tromcheile Ltd

Pre CE Link: She was referred in by her Mediator. She is a 46 year old lone parent with four dependant children.

Respondent 3

Current Position: Employed by Tesco Clarehall

Pre CE Link: She was referred in by her Mediator. She is a 26 year old lone parent with one child and is an ex-drug misuser.

Respondent 4

Current Position: Beginning CE on 5th December 2005 with Tromcheile Ltd

Pre CE Link: She was referred in by another CE programme supervisor as she was on their waiting list for CE. She is 36 years old and in receipt of a Disability Allowance payment.

## Programme 2

Respondent 5

Current Position: On Pre CE Training Programme

Pre CE Link: Referred in by her mediator. She is a 27 year old lone parent with 1 child.

Respondent 6

Current Position: On Pre CE Training Programme

Pre CE Link: Self-referred onto the programme. She is a 28-year-old lone parent with 3 children

Respondent 7

Current Position: On Pre CE Training Programme

Pre CE Link: Referred in by her mediator. She is a 36 year old lone parent with 7 children.

Respondent 8

Current Position: On Pre CE Training Programme

Pre CE Link: Referred in by his mediator. He is a 33 year old single male who is in receipt of a Disability Benefit

## Programme Staff

Name: Carmel McPartlin

Current Position: Enterprise & Employment Development Officer with Northside Partnership.  
Pre CE Link: Programme Designer and Co-ordinator  
Has background in Community Employment (CE) – was participant first then moved up to assistant supervisor then co-ordinator of the Northside CE Network Support Service (over 65 projects) before taking on present position.

Name: Helen Smartt  
Current Position: Mediator with the Northside Partnership Local Employment Service (LES)  
Pre CE Link: Helen's clients who are eligible for CE are put forward for the programme. Helen's main client group is NEAP's (National Employment Action Plan). This client group is the long-term unemployed who have been targeted under NEAP to help them progress them into further education, training and or employment from the live register.

Name: Christine Campbell  
Current Position: Director & Trainer, Optimum Ltd  
Pre CE Link: Training Company Programme Manager  
Christine and her team deliver the main bulk of the training on the Pre CE programme.

## Appendix 2: In-depth Interview Results

### Programme 1 Pre-CE Interview Results

Question	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
Why did you want to do the Pre-CE?	FAS suggested pre-CE in order to prepare for full CE. I started almost immediately.	Mediator recommended it. I was looking to get back to work.	To help build up confidence and speak for myself	To get a full CE scheme.
What did you hope to achieve?	To find out what I wanted to do. To get back on the straight and narrow. I set a few goals – to get a job and to improve myself.	I was really shy and very nervous. I wanted to get a job and to get experience on CE. Veronica helped settle me down – “keep in your mind that you are better than them”	To increase confidence and to get a job in childcare. I already have some qualifications.	To eventually teach computers or get an administration job. I have done the ECDL course.
How long is it since you last worked and why did you leave?	3 years ago with Argos. Was doing nights and asked to go full time but I had a young child and said no. I just got into a rut.	Worked in a restaurant in the UK and came back home about 6 years ago.	2 years in various crèches and college in Killester and DIT, Rathmines studying childcare.	3-4 years ago. I had a child. IT was in Motorola and I needed my mind stimulated.
Did the course meet your expectations?	I had no real expectations – I didn't know what to expect.	No expectations going in. But it was brilliant. I hated when it ended - it was only 4 weeks.	No real expectations - it just really helped build confidence.	No - we were led to believe that it would lead to a full CE.
What did you like about the course?	Trainers were very good and knew what they were talking about. No bullshit. Handouts were very clear.	Everything.	Getting to know new people	STEPS and Communications People and instructors
What improvements would you suggest?	Could develop on elements like customer service. Course was a little short and intense.	No real improvements. The course showed everything – how to prevent fire, health and safety and manual handling	None	Pre-CE should lead to the full CE. I am still looking to get onto the full CE scheme. People on the course were stressed out not knowing what was going to happen. They should let people know.

What did you think of the STEPS programme?	Brilliant. Veronica Williams was very good.	Brilliant – would loved it to be longer.	Very good and interesting.	I thought it was good for people who really needed motivation – it really benefited them. I didn't need it as much.
Has your outlook on life changed?	Yes.	Yes.	No. <i>(Note: checked on this a number of times in different ways, as it does not fit with answer below. Perhaps respondent saw the changes as finally fitting in with her outlook)</i>	Yes.
In what way?	Gained in confidence daily. Some were in their shell but by the end things were as smooth as silk for everyone. I was able the following week to go out a do an assessment and interview and get a job in Marks and Spencers. Very practical advice on communicating and I am able to hold my own in a large group.	Started CE yesterday and without Pre-CE course I would not have been able to introduce myself. I never realised that I had a goal and the course helped me to describe it. I got confidence – talked about ideas and myself, consciousness and self-consciousness.	My confidence improved and I was able to say things that never said before. I am now more outgoing and it helped with my communication skills.	It got me a bit going. I will try my best to get onto the full CE and to go back to school [college] for further education.
What part of the programme influenced you most?	All the trainers were good – Veronica, Kieran and Christine all stood out. It was like I needed a kick in the arse and I got it.	STEPS. The confidence it gave me. I was talking to strangers for hours whereas before I would never have opened my mouth.	STEPS and manual handling and health and safety.	Communications. Also, people talking about my strengths – a good timekeeper, good mother – peer support. Christine gave good advice on job hunting and preparation.

How did you manage with the change in your daily routine?	It was enjoyable to go to every morning. The first few weeks were quite structured and I knew what was going to happen. The last few weeks there was no structure which is the only negative. The course helped me.	No real problems getting up. I have 8 children so I'd get them to school. I couldn't wait to go to the course each morning.	Up at 7-ish and in for 9. I could manage the routine.	Routine was easy to manage. I got loads of support from my family.
Would you recommend the Pre-CE programme to a friend or family member?	Big time	I am telling everyone about it.	Yes.	Yes. But not for everyone. It is good for people who need motivation.
Additional Comments	The course will help long term unemployed and those with low self esteem. I suggest a regular review meeting ideally every 3 months. I wouldn't have done this evaluation interview if not for the course.	I have the certificate on my wall and I'll get a few more now. My children are interested in the STEPs programme and the brainteasers. I put the video on of the man who created STEPs. I also play the CD when I am in the kitchen working.	Able to go through STEPs on the CDs at home.	Let them know that at the end there'll be nothing for them. I didn't know what to expect at the end. We should be told at the start of the course.

## Programme 1 Pre- CE Interview Results

Question	Respondent 5	Respondent 6	Respondent 7	Respondent 8
Why did you want to do the Pre-CE?	To get more training before CE scheme. Better prepared.	To get out and meet new people. I never did anything like this before.	To get back into workforce.	To update my skills for job hunting.
What did you hope to achieve?	To get onto a CE scheme and to get into college. Childcare qualifications are a long-term goal.	It is about building confidence. I want to go back and do a commis chef course. I already did a year and a half but CERT fees were a problem. I am determined to go back.	Hope to get training on CE and get into a decent job.	To go on a CE scheme. To update my skills and get a better idea of what is needed in the workplace. I want to work as an administrator in an office and not to be made redundant again. CE gives me the experience and the pay of course.
How long is it since you last worked and why did you leave?	Worked last year in the Breakfast Club and finished in August 05. Ready to do CE.	I had a cleaning job in Brinks 2.5 years ago and left when I became pregnant with my daughter.	No full time work in 19 years – did a little part-time with Rentakil. I had 8 children to look after.	I worked for Greenstar in Sutton 1 year and 4 months ago. They lost the contract and I didn't want to move. Before that I worked on the PCB line in Selectron.
Did the course meet your expectations?	Yes.	Yes. I'm learning about what I want to do. I am a bit stronger in myself.	Yes.	It has helped with my confidence. I feel I need to work on my confidence although I am not lacking in some aspects. So it is meeting my expectations.
What did you like about the course?	Favourite is the skills course with Adrienne Hayes. The STEPS programme.	Manual handling, health and safety and body language.	Self-psychology, STEPs.	Communications and assertiveness was very good. Ideas have helped me think differently. CVs and letters helps my approach to getting a job.
What improvements would you suggest?	Presentation skills course was difficult to understand. It was read too quickly.	Everything is grand. The tutors and the group get on with everybody.	None. Think it is absolutely brilliant. Just keep it going.	Maybe use TV and DVD more. STEPs used TV a lot and it is a good way to learn.

What did you think of the STEPS programme?	Absolutely excellent. I look forward to Adrienne coming in.	Brilliant although it can be emotional. But that can be good because I am learning about myself. Adrienne is brilliant.	Fabulous. Find myself reading it at home and even some of the children are reading it. Normally can't get them to pick up a book and they're sitting down reading STEPs.	Adrienne is very good at giving the course.
Has your outlook on life changed?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
In what way?	Being positive and dealing with setbacks. Learning how to speak up and to listen. I don't get stressed and it is helping me in the long term. It is just brilliant how your brain can work and solve things. I am reading the folders at home at night.	I feel a lot stronger in myself and good about myself. I am only on it 3 weeks but I have learned a lot.	More outgoing and find I can now have "adult" conversations. Meeting new people.	It has been a confidence builder and my skills related to getting a job have improved. I think differently.
What part of the programme influenced you most?	STEPS programme. I would pay for the STEPs programme alone.	STEPS programme. Yesterday's course in particular.	STEPS changed my attitude on day-to-day things. If I want to change something I stick on the DVVD or read the manual.	I like the assertiveness and confidence building. I liked the communications course although some found that difficult I didn't. I liked STEPs and it changed the way I thought and solved problems.
How did you manage with the change in your daily routine?	The hours are very good and make organisation easy. The timing is perfect for my daughter in school.	No real problem. I used to go to the gym in the mornings and now go in the afternoon so I was in a routine anyway.	It gave me something to get up for. I am trying to get out there and give my children a better life. With 8 children I know how to manage time.	Hours are well designed. It helps doing 20 hours per week to build up to 40. People can get lazy doing nothing and inexperienced in dealing with daily problems. The Pre-CE can help them get over this.

<p>Would you recommend the Pre-CE programme to a friend or family member?</p>	<p>Definitely. Anyone I know.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes and I already have done – to friends who want to get back out there.</p>	<p>Yes. It helps people with their social skills and it is like turning a new page – starting afresh. I also recommend that it should last longer.</p>
<p>Additional Comments</p>	<p>STEPs is the best out of the full course. CV and letter writing is good so far. The brainteasers are a good way of showing how the mind works.</p>	<p>lit is good – it is like going back to schools. Now I can think about getting things done. They should do this for all CE participants. I have been waiting 7 years for a CE place.</p>	<p>Brilliant, should keep it going. It is a great incentive to those who haven't been out there in a long time.</p>	<p>Pre-CE can help a wide range of people with different skills and problems. It is very good because of this.</p>

## Pre-CE Trainer, Coordinator and Mediator Interview Results

Question	Christine Campbell, Trainer	Carmel McPartlin, Coordinator	Helen Smartt, Mediator
Why do you think attracts participants to the Pre-CE?	No direct involvement so this is speculation. Many types of people but main reason is lack of self-esteem. The course is not too daunting and this is the first step.	Short, sweet and can see an end in sight. And can also see further down the line if the need to.	Initially wanted to go on CE but when mentioned Pre-CE they immediately see the value in it for them.
What do you think they want to achieve?	Group 1 had progression to CE as a very clear goal. They were extremely motivated. Group 2 is different – they tend to be slower and need a little more handholding but are just as motivated.	Ultimate goal is employment and hoping that this is what is discussed at mediation. Further education or training is also a suitable goal.	All clients lack focus, self esteem and educational attainment. They would all achieve something by doing the pre-CE even if it is only a plan. They are all looking for a job but this may not be their best option. It is about focus and timing.
What are the benefits of the programme?	Tangible skills to transfer to employment. But the in-tangible skills, like self-esteem, are more valuable and have an impact on family and friends.	It is another seed programme providing training and experience. It expands skills of those who have realise they need further training. Also, there is an attitudinal benefit through STEPs that challenges the comfort zone of welfare and makes them see that they are worth more.	Huge amount of clients have no idea of reliability and responsibility. They learn about boundaries and expectations. STEPs programme is very beneficial – they learn their own goals and better able to plan their own training.
Do you think that the course meets participants' expectations?	Difficult to gauge and may vary based on individual experience. Based on last group the answer would be Yes.	Would like to think so. Would be open to changing if it didn't.	Should have some expectations if they have been properly referred. Main expectation is financial and course will meet that in the short term. It is not about a financial benefit.
What do you think participants like about the course?	It is an opportunity to learn from each other. To have opinions heard and discussed.	It is not like school it is more like a workshop. They need to turn up to get paid. It is a relaxed atmosphere to meet new people in one go who are all from the same background with the same goal. It is a fun learning experience	Low self-esteem group will benefit from STEPs. Financial gain. Routine brings a meaning to their life.

What improvements do you think participants would suggest?	NIFAST manual handling training was ineffective. Trainer spoke too fast and was unresponsive. Solid teaching skills are a must.	More STEPs and more guest speakers	Change start time to 9:15 or 9:30 might make life easier on young mothers.
How do you think participants consider the STEPS programme?	All entirely positive.	Life changing and could be intense. Would like to think that it is help rather than seeing a councillor.	Brilliant
Do you think their outlook on life is changing or has changed?	Would say so. Disappointed if it didn't. All indicators point to a positive change.	Yes.	Yes.
In what way?	More faith in their own abilities and potential. More will to make a contribution and go forward for further courses pr work. Better understanding of their own strengths.	Self worth improvement. Also increased independence – less dependence on state and friends etc and improved view on how others may depend on them.	Example – an in recovery, low methadone drug-abuser used to have problems making appointments. After the course she now knows what is expected and turns up on time.
What part of the programme do you think influences participants most?	Based on discussions STEPs had a huge impact. Less obvious would be career development, interview skills, preparation – this would have a “how to” impact.	STEPs	STEPs
How do you think participants manage with the change in their daily routine?	No significant problems. All on time. Group tool ownership and never had to be encouraged back from breaks. Notice would always be given if someone could not make it.	At the end of the course they will have adapted to routine and would like to think that they will continue to do so.	The course is a good sampler, a good stepping-stone to try routine and further development.
Do you think participants will recommend the Pre-CE programme to a friend or family member?	Would think so.	Yes.	Yes.

Additional Comments	One of the best programmes. Group 1 worked well because chemistry was right. Every group is different and there is a need to tailor and amend accordingly.	Currently supervisors choose CE participants. Would like to think that pre-CE would be able to get automatically placed in CE. CE picking process is not transparent and there may be more deserving cases. Other partnerships have contacted me about this course.	Should be the first step for all CE. It would be a good recruiting ground and a proper screening process to see who would most benefit from CE.
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## Appendix 3: Pre-CE Training Programme

Pre-CE Training Programme for Progression to FAS Active Labour Market Initiatives

Day	Training
1 9AM – 1PM	Introduction and registration – an informal get together to ascertain participants expectations of Community Employment
2 9AM – 1PM	About Community Employment – discuss participants entitlements while on CE including training, holidays, wages etc.
3 9AM – 1PM	Team Work – Learning to be part of a team will aid the participants when taking part in CE
4 9AM – 1PM	Barriers To Work – Lets participants identify their barriers to work and discover ways to overcome them
5 9AM – 1PM	Guest Speaker – Invited guest from local social welfare office to inform participants of the benefits that are available to them if they take up employment during or after CE. Information also provided on availability of part-time work option while on CE.
6 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
7 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
8 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
9 9AM – 1PM	Guest Speaker Invited guest speakers in from local colleges to inform participants of the education/training courses that are available to them while on CE
10 9AM – 1PM	Health & Safety – First formal training module. As both this and the Manual Handling training modules are short training courses and certified it will give participants their first feeling of achievement through training.
11 9AM – 1PM	Guest Speaker Invited guest speaker in from the Local FAS office to inform participants of the training courses that are available to them while on CE
12 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
13 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
14 9AM – 1PM	Manual Handling – Second formal training module
15 9AM – 1PM	Skills Assessment/ Transferable Skills – participants can identify acquired life skills that are transferable and applicable to what they may want to achieve in the future.
16 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME

17 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
18 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
19 9AM – 1PM	STEPS PROGRAMME
20 9AM – 1PM	Review – Participants look back to see how far they have come and how far they can go in the future