

# **Evaluation of Coventry & Warwickshire Substance Misuse Initiative Employment Support Project**

by

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*A partnership between*



## **Coventry & Warwickshire Substance Misuse Initiative**

### **Employment Support Project**

#### **Executive Summary**

The Employment Support Project in Warwickshire is built on a partnership between Warwickshire Probation Service (Lead Agency), South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust, Orbit Housing Association and Jephson Homes Housing Association. These key agencies aim to integrate approaches to tackling drug misuse. This is particularly appropriate in Warwickshire where drug misuse constitutes a significant, yet still manageable, problem.

The following report highlights the main achievements of this unique Employment Support Project (ESP) which is designed to encourage, support and guide drug-misusers into relevant employment, training and/or personal development opportunities. It also provides an overview of success measures, added-value and sustainability issues directly linked to the immediate and future work of the project.

The ESP is a small-scale project, yet it has had a far-reaching effect. It has involved inter-agency and client work in the community, and produced tangible outcomes for adults, employers and local agencies. It has exceeded SRB targets and produced a wide range of approaches to motivate and re-engage adults into learning and work. Good and interesting practices include: strategies to help clients take the first step towards achieving their desired goal(s) and setting realistic and achievable targets to help equip clients with the confidence to succeed. Strong networking and community links are central to the success of the project.

A variety of approaches have also been used in relation to awareness raising, development of workplace drug policies and information, advice and training for employers and employees on drug-related issues. High quality materials have been developed such as newsletters, training manuals and company drug policies, as well as delivering training in the workplace on drug-related issues. Health and safety in the workplace features strongly and the ESP has demonstrated that it has made a positive contribution to developing work in this area.

The ESP has developed its work based on two key principles. Firstly, individual clients should be judged on their own merits without the unnecessary label of 'drug misuser', and secondly, a totally employer focussed approach is designed to avoid any hidden agendas e.g. pressure to fill vacancies. From our research, we discovered that this is a relatively unique way of working with employers and would benefit from further research.

Finally, destination figures and feedback from clients clearly indicate that many have made successful transitions into work, training and personal development opportunities. It is also noted that, in some cases, clients are now 'drugs free'.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The 'SRB Substance Misuse Initiative' is a six-year programme supported through the SRB Challenge Fund. It aims to combat problems arising from drug misuse in Warwickshire. There are three inter-related projects which operate by:

- supporting drug misusers into stable accommodation;
- supporting drug misusers into stable training and/or employment;
- working with the community to develop a drugs community safety/regeneration strategy.

1.2 A major part of the SRB initiative is to support the development of strong local partnerships with clear roles and responsibilities. It seeks to build on good practice and to represent value for money without duplicating existing work. Multi-agency working is vital to ensure its success. To help achieve this, £797,316 of SRB funding<sup>1</sup> was secured over the six-year period, together with £144,000 from the Housing Corporation.

## **2. Context**

2.1 This initiative is built on a partnership between Warwickshire Probation Service (Lead Agency), South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust, Orbit Housing Association and Jephson Homes Housing Association. These key agencies aim to integrate three separate approaches to tackling drug misuse. This is particularly appropriate in Warwickshire where drug misuse constitutes a significant, yet still manageable, problem. The initiative is taking place alongside other local community and volunteer projects and government initiatives including the new Connexions Service, the New Deal, One and the Neighbourhood Support Fund.

## **3. Scope**

3.1 In October 2000, the Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS), University of Derby was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of one of the three main strands of the Substance Misuse Initiative: the Employment Support Project (ESP) based in Warwickshire.

3.2 The main thrust of the ESP is to:

- a) work with individual drug misusers to support their transition and re-integration into the workforce;
- b) work with employers to inform and advise on drug related issues including drugs awareness training and the development of resource materials.

3.3 From the outset, it was agreed that a 'qualitative' rather than 'quantitative' approach was necessary, given the project had exceeded the agreed SRB targets as reported earlier by Powell & Sandham (2000).<sup>2</sup> The main focus of this evaluation was to investigate the added-value of the project in relation to existing provision, to identify what has been achieved, and how the lessons learned can be implemented into future strategic and operational plans within Warwickshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Wes Lacey, Warwickshire Probation Service 1/2/01

<sup>2</sup> Coventry & Warwickshire Substance Misuse Initiative: *The SRB Employment Project* by Tim Powell & James Sandham May 2000.

- 3.4 The report is structured to enable key points to be identified.
- Sections 4 & 5 Aims and methodology
  - Section 6 Brief overview of the main achievements of the project
  - Sections 7 & 8 Detailed information on the management, organisation and delivery of the ESP
  - Sections 9 Explores inter-agency work.
  - Section 10 Explores the added-value factors linked to the project and evidence of good and interesting practice.
  - Section 11 Discusses issues linked to sustainability and the long-term future of the project.
  - Section 12 Recommendations are made to inform partners on the potential future development of the project.

#### **4. Aims**

4.1 This report investigates the main achievements of the project and analyses local policies and practices to inform future development work. It considers the main options available to help sustain the ESP, and provides a set of recommendations to inform the future development of a planned strategy for supporting drug misusers into suitable employment and training in Warwickshire.

4.2 The main objectives were as follows:

- to review existing arrangements and identify the main outcomes and achievements of the project;
- to identify the knowledge, skills and experience of the ESP workers who are currently providing support to drug misusers in the Warwickshire community;
- to examine how the project links with other local employment/training initiatives;
- to assess the sustainability of current arrangements and to identify key issues relating to future delivery plans;
- to make a series of recommendations which will inform future delivery plans and support for drug misusers who are seeking entry into the workforce.

#### **5. Methodology**

5.1 A preliminary meeting was held with two managers from Warwickshire Probation Service to discuss the parameters of the project and to identify key areas for investigation. This was followed by a review of documentation relating to the initiative, including a research report completed by Powell & Sandham 1999/2000 which provides data on throughput and quantifiable outputs. In consultation with project staff, a list of key contacts was drawn up to enable in-depth discussions to be held with a range of representatives from relevant local agencies (*refer to Appendix 1*).

5.2 During November 2000 – January 2001, fourteen face-to-face interviews were conducted in Warwickshire, drawing on perspectives from project staff, users of the service, agency representatives and local employers. Seven telephone interviews were also undertaken (*refer to Appendix 2*).

Contacts were also made with government offices and other relevant agencies to investigate:

- a) good and interesting practice in this field of work
- b) options for sustaining the work of the project beyond 2002.

The researchers also sought to identify other similar or identical projects in the Midlands region; however, as a result of contacts with local authorities and other voluntary agencies it became apparent that this project appears to be quite unique.

5.3 The findings from Powell & Sandham (2000) indicated that positive outcomes had already been achieved in terms of meeting SRB targets. This evaluation report identifies the processes that are contributing to the development and success of the project.

5.4 There are some points that must be borne in mind before drawing conclusions about the findings. Firstly, the sample may not be fully representative given we were dependent on the goodwill of those who were willing to give up their time to meet with us, and the information supplied in relation to key contact persons. Secondly, the focus of our discussions centred on the views and experiences of those involved with the project, rather than an objective measurement of total throughput. Some data is presented to illustrate on the quantitative achievements of the project from April 1999 – December 2000. However, emphasis placed on ‘qualitative information’ based on individuals’ perceptions and experiences of the ESP as agreed with Warwickshire Probation Service. This approach offers an overall picture of the work and the main achievements of the project.

## **6. Overview of the ESP’s main achievements**

6.1 The ESP is a small-scale project, yet it has had a far-reaching effect. It has involved inter-agency and client work in the community and produced tangible outcomes for clients, employers and local agencies. Our findings highlight:

1. This is a highly innovative and dynamic project that has made a significant contribution to supporting drug misusers into employment and training in Warwickshire (*e.g. paras. 8.7, 8.10, 8.12, 10.3*).
2. The two Employment Workers appear to be greatly valued by their clients and local agencies, and viewed by many as providing an essential specialist service to drug misusers in the community (*e.g. paras. 8.9, 8.22, 10.4*).
3. Employers and other local agencies have utilised the ESP’s specialist training and information services on drug related issues as part of developing effective health & safety policies and procedures in the workplace. (*e.g. paras. 8.19 & 8.20*).
4. A high standard has been achieved in terms of the quality of publications produced and training sessions held within employers premises (*para.8.20*).
5. A range of good and interesting practice in relation to work with clients, local employers and employees. (*para.*)
6. Partnerships and strong inter-agency working links are well developed throughout the county and the ESP has made a positive contribution to inter-agency working (*para. 9.1*).

7. The two Employment Workers have co-authored a booklet on drugs in the workplace. This will be funded by Drug Action Team (DAT) in Warwickshire and published very shortly. (*para. 8.23*).
8. There is potential to further develop and extend the role of the Employment Workers in partnership with other relevant agencies at local and national levels. (*paras. 10.3, 10.6, 11.1 – 11.10*).

## **7. Management and organisation of the project**

- 7.1 The project has a Scheme Manager, employed by Warwickshire Probation Service, who is accountable to the SRB Steering Group. This group meets on a quarterly basis to review progress, targets and achievements. Two Employment Workers currently carry out the planning and delivery of the ESP; both are located within the Community Drug Teams (CDT) in Leamington Spa and Rugby.

They are currently employed on temporary contracts; one of the contracts is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002 and the other is due to expire in April 2001. The workers main task is to tackle some of the obstacles to the rehabilitation of drug misusers into the workforce by offering individual support to clients and raising awareness of drug-related issues with employers and employees in the workplace. Together they have responsibility for accepting referrals from throughout Warwickshire.

- 7.2 At present, both Warwickshire Probation Service and South Warwickshire Community Care NHS Trust have joint responsibility for the strategic planning, delivery and development of the ESP. This has developed as a result of SRB funding for one of the employment workers ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1999, and the post continuing with the support of Warwickshire Safer Communities Chief Officer Group funding<sup>3</sup>. A re-organisation of the Drugs Services in Warwickshire also came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1999, and resulted in the Rugby Community Drugs Team coming under the auspices of South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust. The partners agreed to place emphasis “on the continuation of the SRB doubled-pronged provision of employment/training support for drug misusers.”<sup>4</sup>

- 7.3 Line management responsibility for the two employment workers is shared as follows:

- Warwickshire Probation Service provides ongoing support, particularly in relation to SRB funding issues and training.
- South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust provides ongoing support through the Community Drugs Teams (CDTs) including day-to-day management with specific responsibility for supervision.

- 7.4 At a strategic level, there are clear benefits of this dual-management arrangement which provides strong partnership working between agencies and opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise, as well as developing joint responses to local needs. From a practitioner perspective this dual arrangement results in competing demands on time and resources. Employment Workers would welcome more guidance in relation to priorities and targets.

- 7.5 Both workers are integral to the CDTs in Warwickshire. They attend weekly team meetings in their respective areas to provide feedback on their work as well as keeping up-to-date with drugs-related developments.

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<sup>3</sup> Source of funding confirmed by Wes Lacey, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Warwickshire Probation.

<sup>4</sup> Advantage West Midlands Single Regeneration Budget Delivery Plan 2000/2001: pg.6,para.33

The main advantages of being situated within CDTs are as follows:

- *CDTs refer clients* for specialist employment/training support. They view the workers as having specific knowledge and skills in this area of work
- CDTs are the *primary source of referrals*
- *CDTs provide information and training opportunities* on a wide range of drug related issues including clinics and drug services
- *CDTs record client information and the employment workers have access to confidential data* that may not be disclosed to other external agencies.

Both project workers indicated that through the CDTs they constantly up-date their knowledge and understanding of the issues clients have to face at the various stages of their rehabilitation. A project worker stated:

*“Just being there is an ice-breaker and it gives us instant credibility in the eyes of our clients.”*  
(Employment Worker)

*“One of the best things is that it is based here (CDT, Rugby). Drug users come here anyway. They probably wouldn’t bother to go somewhere else but because it’s on site they attend, well attend first time. After I met my Employment Worker I wanted to come back and see him.”*  
(Client)

- 7.6 Although both Employment Workers are based within the CDTs they are flexible in terms of the delivery of services to drug misusers and employers, therefore they work within the community to suit individuals’ needs.

## **8. Delivery of the project**

- 8.1 There are two main areas of work undertaken by the Employment Workers:

- 1) Client work
- 2) Employer work

Inter-agency work is also a key feature designed to underpin and support client and employer activities.

### **Client work**

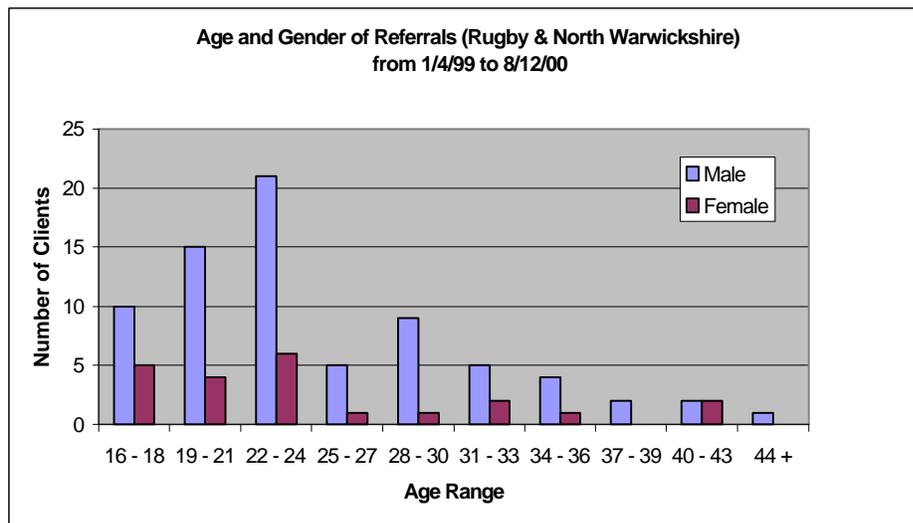
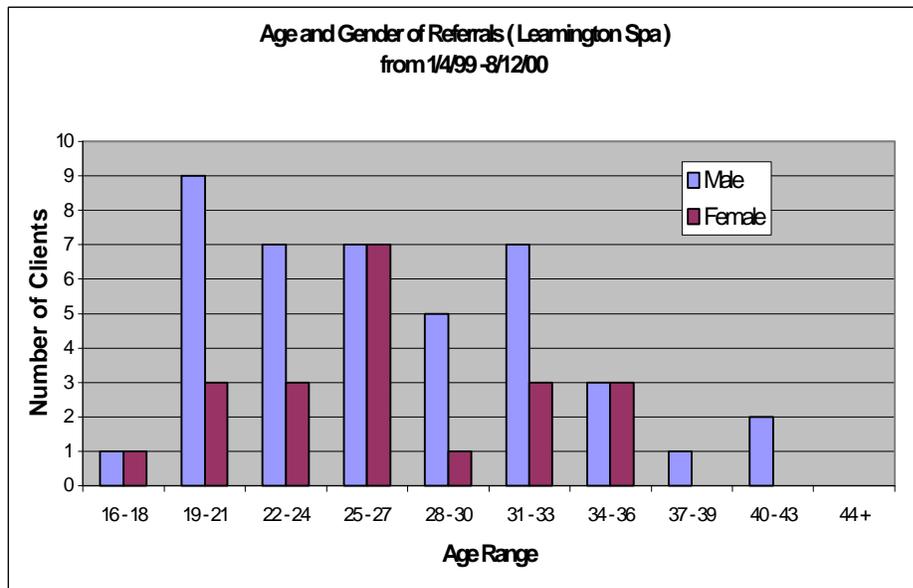
- 8.2 Respondents indicated that in theory this client group can access mainstream provision; however, in practice many, if left to their own devices, will not access mainstream provision for a host of reasons including:

- fear of being labelled;
- negative experiences from previous encounters;
- agencies not understanding their drug-related issues;
- targets taking priority over individual needs;
- bureaucracy and form filling requirements;
- cannot be bothered as a result of poor motivation.

- 8.3 From April 1999 to December 2000, the two Employment Workers have recorded a total of 191 referrals. The two charts below provide an overview of referrals with an analysis of age and gender. In Appendices 3 & 4, it can be seen that the numbers of referrals for Leamington Spa and for Rugby & North Warwickshire are 63 and 128 respectively.

This suggests that the referral rate in the Rugby & North Warwickshire is almost double that of Leamington Spa. However, close examination of the Rugby & North Warwickshire figures shows that 30 clients did not attend their initial interviews. It is not clear from the Leamington Spa data if there may be a similar number of non-attendees. The actual number of clients in Rugby & North Warwickshire is in effect 98. Whilst this is still higher than the Leamington Spa figure, the analysis shows that in Leamington Spa 301 appointments were made for the 63 clients, whereas only 206 appointments were made for the 98 clients in Rugby & North Warwickshire.

The average *appointment: client ratio* for Rugby & North Warwickshire is 2:1 compared to 5:1 in Leamington Spa. It is noted that in Rugby & North Warwickshire there is a large and well-established Community Drugs Team, and consequently an increasing number of referrals are made. This data does not take into account the relative population densities in both areas.

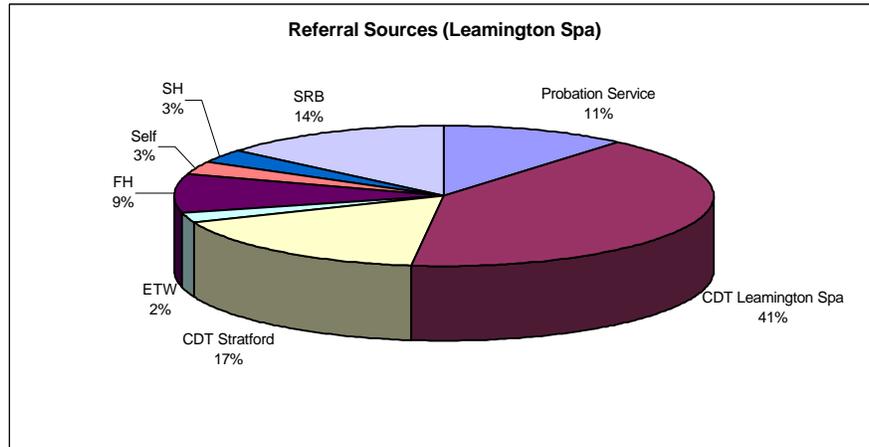


8.4 Each worker has an average caseload of 6-8 clients with whom they work intensively at any one time. In many cases they continue to maintain contact with clients within and outside employment, education & training over lengthy periods (refer to para. 10.3). At present, the Employment Workers are able to respond quickly to referrals; they do not have a long waiting list of clients to be seen. Both stated that they currently work only with clients who want help and support to find suitable employment, training and/or voluntary work. This approach may be tested, given their planned contribution to the recently introduced Government Drugs Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs).

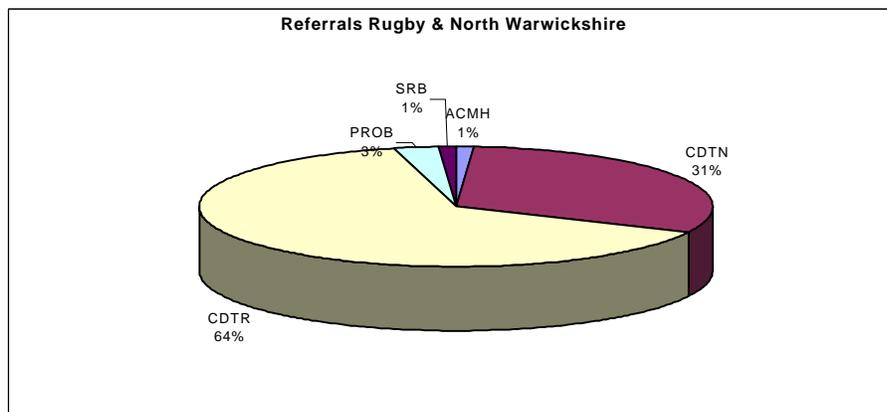
8.5 The way of working was described as follows:

- information is gathered from the original referral source;
- an initial assessment takes place to gauge motivation, occupational interests, needs and ideas in relation to future plans;
- further information may be requested using CDT record systems;
- a plan of action is agreed;
- follow-up appointments are made (if appropriate)

8.6 The pie-charts below illustrate the main referral agencies.



**KEY:** Leamington Spa Probation Service, CDT (Community Drugs Team) Leamington Spa, CDT (Community Drugs Team) Stratford, (ETW) Employment Training Warwickshire, (FH) Fry Housing, (Self) Self, (SH) Stonham Housing, (SRB) Single Regeneration Budget Housing Project.



**KEY:** Rugby and North Warwickshire (PROB) Probation Service, (SRB) Single Regeneration Budget Worker, (ACMH) Avenue Clinic Mental Health, (CDTN) Community Drugs Teams, Nuneaton, (CDTR) Community Drugs Team, Rugby.

Although drug misusers access services from a range of different agencies. The information above reflects the key referral agencies.

8.7 The research findings show that the project has the following distinctive features in relation to client work:

- Building relationships with individuals, developing rapport, increasing self-esteem and confidence. For example:

*“We help them realise their aims and to have the confidence to do things for themselves. We provide them with the tools and techniques so that they see that they’re not no hopers.”*

(Employment Worker)

*“He really boosted my confidence and never judged me. He saw me as a person.”*

(Client)

*“He brought me out of my shell. Before I met him, I spent my time just lounging around, doing nothing.”*

(Client)

*“He met me when I had no confidence and no self-esteem and somehow helped me to put myself back together again.”*

(Client)

#### **Case-study 1**

A male client, viewed by many as a ‘no hoper’, was referred to the ESP by the Probation Service. This client had a drug-related criminal history. He was previously a long distance lorry driver who had lost his licence due to the influence of drink and drugs. It was diagnosed that this type of work was unsuitable, and through the Employment Worker, contacts were made with a local New Deal Adviser, and the client was offered a place on a forklift truck driving course. He gained a High Achievers Award followed by a full-time job working as a Forklift Truck Driver. He has remained drug free and successfully maintained his current employment.

#### **Case-study 2**

A 23 year-old male, who has a fairly severe drug addiction (mainly heroin), has experienced regular relapses and been through detox several times. He is reasonably stable at present although continues to use large amounts of cannabis. He lives alone in a flat having progressed from supported accommodation. Initially this client was reserved and offered little information or conversation. He would always wear a big hat and there was hardly any eye contact for the first few weeks. Gradually, the Employment Worker built up a good relationship with him built on mutual trust and respect. This client has now discarded his hat, shaved off his beard and is able to maintain good eye contact. The employment worker has also built up a good working relationship with the clients New Deal Adviser, and they are working together to explore suitable training and/or employment opportunities.

- 8.8 Many of this client group often fall at the first hurdle when they attempt to engage with other agencies mainly because:

*“They feel they are often labelled or the formal set up is exactly what has driven them to rebel or drop-out.”*

(Employment Worker)

*“I felt that other people who I’ve seen in the past have either been judgmental or have tried to fit me into a slot. He does things for me and there is never any pressure; he knows I need the best deal going for me otherwise I’d never stick at it.”*

(Client)

*“I messed up before, now I really want to make a go of it!”*

(Client)

- 8.9 The Employment Workers are willing to help clients take the first step towards achieving their desired goal. Often this involves accompanying them to relevant agencies to access appropriate services e.g. visiting the Careers Centre to access information on local opportunities or to test out career ideas. The workers have accompanied clients to meet with One and New Deal Advisers to help resolve benefit problems. In most cases:

*“We get them through the door so that they can see what help is on offer.”*

(Employment Worker)

*“The two Employment Workers offer in-depth support to people with drug problems. They bring individuals to us who may otherwise opt out of job the system.”*

(Employment Service Manager)

### **Case-study 3**

A 27 year old graduate client had a heroin addiction and was spending approximately £70 a day on drugs. She was also the victim of domestic violence and a lone parent with two young children. The Community Drugs Team referred her to the ESP given the client was contemplating returning to education or some form of employment. Following ongoing help and support from the Employment Worker she has decided to pursue voluntary work supporting victims of domestic violence. An interview was arranged at a local project and a placement was successfully secured. The Employment Worker accompanied her to the local Benefit Office and Employment Services and managed to help organise New Deal Lone Parent payments with options for training and childcare arrangements for her children. The Employment Worker has negotiated that some of the 20 hours study required to attract New Deal funding can be undertaken at home. This client indicated that she needed this flexibility to help her build her confidence as she gradually adapts to a new lifestyle.

- 8.10 Clients are also supported to prepare curriculum vitae and speculative letters to assist them with their job search. For example:

*“My Employment Worker helped me do a fantastic CV. He has all the contacts and made a number of enquiries for me. He spoke to a few people and then it was then all up to me, and I did it! I got the job I wanted which was brilliant”.*

(Client)

#### **Case-study 4**

For the past 6-7 months, a male client with a history of drug misuse and mental illness, in the form of bouts of depression, has received ongoing support from one of the Employment Workers. Initial meetings indicated that this client had a poor self-image and greatly lacked confidence. He indicated that he wanted to work with drug misusers following the death of his brother. The Employment Worker was able to arrange a placement in a local voluntary organisation who offer a telephone drug counselling service. Following a four week in-house training course, the client gained part-time employment within this organisation. He was also encouraged by the Employment Worker to complete an outward bound course with the Princes Trust and was so enthused by this that he is now working as a voluntary helper. As a result, he now plans to join Raleigh International working as a Voluntary Helper. He has recently been informed by the Princes Trust that there is a strong possibility they may offer him some paid employment.

- 8.11 It is important to recognise that work with this client group is intensive and demanding. Some clients may not reach a state of readiness to engage in employment or training for quite some time. This can result in the Employment Workers having to deal with complex and highly sensitive issues over a period of time. There is a need for closer mentoring and supervision in order to ensure that Employment Workers can share their experiences and resolve any difficult issues. This would also enable their managers to review practice and identify specific training needs. It would also enable the project managers to monitor work more closely and fully assess the optimum benefits of current policies and practices.
- 8.12 A step-by-step approach is adopted to encourage clients to achieve realistic goals. For some clients the initial primary goal will be to keep their next appointment. For others, it may involve undertaking a task such as using a college prospectus to identify something of interest. Both workers believe that many drug misusers need to see instant results if they are to maintain their motivation. Hence, the setting of realistic and achievable goals to help equip clients with the confidence to succeed. They also believe that:

*“We must help our clients to achieve targets for themselves for this to mean anything, not to do all the work for them.”*  
(Employment Worker)

#### **Case-study 5**

Client X is approaching the end of the gateway period for New Deal and will soon have to make a decision regarding his next step. His Employment Worker has worked closely with the New Deal Adviser and has managed to negotiate an extended period on the programme. Client X wants to discuss the options with his Employment Worker before meeting the New Deal Adviser. He values his support and feels he can easily explain his worries and concerns. One of the main problems for the client is making a decision regarding his vocational interests. Due to relapses, he has not worked for over a year and needs time to come to terms with the demands of everyday life. This client is quite clear about the need for ongoing support from someone who is “genuinely interested” in helping him improve the quality of his life.

- 8.13 The Employment Workers recognise the benefits of following-up clients to monitor their progress and achievements. This also provides an opportunity to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the project. However, at present there is no formal system in place to follow-up clients after they have been placed into employment, training and/or voluntary work. This is currently not a requirement of the SRB initiative although this type of information is sometimes gathered informally or via the Community Drugs Teams.
- 8.14 Systems for recording client data have been developed by the Employment Workers. This provides valuable information on referrals, appointments, drug dependency and expenditure, and outcomes/progress. The Employment Workers would benefit from a review of how they record client data in order to agree a common recording system. At present, there are distinct variations in the level of detailed records particularly in relation to outcomes and progress. The Employment Workers have worked well together to share ideas on how to improve this; however, a steer from the project managers is required linked to an agreed evaluation strategy.

### **Employer work**

- 8.15 Warwickshire has a less than 5% share of the regional unemployment total – a figure that continues to diminish. Stratford and Warwick have the lowest unemployment rates in the West Midlands. Elementary unskilled and semi-skilled work is the biggest single category of vacancies notified to JobCentres in Warwickshire – these account for one in five of all incoming vacancies. Clerical vacancies account for an 18% share, much higher than a regional share. The nature of the workforce is confirmed by the fact that 20% of jobseekers locally are looking for clerical work against 15% regionally, with 18% seeking managerial and professional work against 13% regionally. Warwickshire proportions of vacancies at the ‘bottom-end’ are all lower than the regional shares.<sup>5</sup> (refer to Appendix 5)
- 8.16 There are two main strands of employer work undertaken by the Employment Workers as follows:
- awareness raising and development of workplace drug policies;
  - information, advice and training for employers and employees on drug-related issues.
- 8.17 The way of working with employers was described by the project workers as follows:
- telephone responses to enquiries related to training requirements and information needs;
  - targeting local employers through newsletters, information bulletins and mailings in order to promote the ESP;
  - visits to employers premises to educate employers and/or employees on drug-related issues;
  - developing written materials and resources for use in the workplace.
- 8.18 Prior to the ESP, the Community Drug Teams (CDTs) undertook this work. It was stated that:

“None of the CDT staff had sufficient expertise in this area of work and the SRB funding provided an opportunity to strengthen our links with employers.”  
(CDT Manager)

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<sup>5</sup> Employment Service Intelligence Unit, West Midlands Regional Office, Birmingham (2001).

8.19 The Chamber of Commerce provided information on local employers with 50 or more staff. Figures relating to the period June 1999 to December 2000 show:

- **Nos. of Businesses Advised** = 26

The types of businesses advised include a wide range of companies drawn from the Engineering, Manufacturing, Clerical, Transport and Distribution sectors. At least 50% of companies advised are large companies such as Peugeot, Wolverhampton Council and TeleWest Communications. The remaining comprise small-medium sized enterprises (*refer to Appendix 6*).

- **Increased awareness of drugs in the workplace (employers)** = 17

Work with employers in the North of the county has focused on Rugby College, Alstom (GEC), Princes Trust, YMCA, Rugby Doorsafe and other small local enterprises. In contrast, the South has developed ongoing links with the Employment Service, South Warwickshire Community Care National Health Trust and Princes Trust (*refer to Appendix 7*).

- **Increased awareness of drugs in the workplace (employees)** = 152

The figures show that a substantive amount of work has been completed with employees.

- **Increased awareness of drugs in the workplace (Warwickshire-wide companies)** = 14
- **Increased awareness of drugs in the workplace (Warwickshire-wide company employees)** = 111

*Appendix 6* shows that 66% of companies worked with are major employers throughout the county. Such as Warwickshire Police Authority, Employment Services, Benefit Agencies and South Warwickshire Community Care National Health Trust. Our findings indicate that the Employment Workers have proactively developed these working links and engaged with employers and employees on their premises. Further research is required to fully ascertain the impact of their work in this area. It is apparent that the ESP has exceeded the SRB targets.

8.20 It is clear that both Employment Workers have made a significant contribution to developing high quality materials such as newsletters, training manuals and company drug policies, as well as delivering training in the workplace on drug-related issues. The case studies below provide further evidence.

### **Case Study 6**

“The company Doctor informed me about the service. I then contacted an Employment Worker about drug awareness training for my apprentices. This has become a crucial element of our training given the nature of the work i.e. on precision engineering machinery where a mistake could cost us millions plus our reputation. Both Employment workers have undertaken four training sessions in our engineering company and are now a part of the induction programme.”

The employer describes the service provided as *“absolutely first class, wonderful”*. He has approximately 45 young people on the apprentice scheme and the issue of drugs is top of the agenda. They have had a number of young people who have abused drugs in the past.

The employer has sat in on the training and stated:

*“They come in and do a super job. They tell everyone, in particular the young people about the effects different drugs can have and the likely effect on their performance at work. They really drive the message home so that no-one is left in any doubt about the potential impact of drug misuse. The last presentation Jamie did he used his laptop. It was very slick and to the point”*.

### **Case Study 7**

A local employer had experienced problems in the past with employees she suspected of misusing drugs. When they received the newsletter from the project outlining the help they could give to employers, the Personnel officer contacted them to ask for further information. The Employment Workers jointly delivered four sessions on drugs awareness that were open to all staff and managers. Out of approximately 130 staff, about 80 attended. The feedback on the sessions was extremely positive.

*“It was very impressive and enlightened us. We all know that some people take what they consider to be recreational drugs, but we were unaware of the potential consequences both for individuals and as employers.”*

### **Case Study 8**

A Personnel Manager telephoned the drugs advisory service because they had a problem with one of their employees. She was given a contact name who then visited them to discuss the problem.

The Manager was grateful for the service because she had an employee who was suspected of taking drugs and the company had no idea how to deal with the situation. The Employment Worker was able to give them some advice as to how to proceed and also some information on drugs, signs and symptoms and about drug policies in the workplace.

Our findings indicate that those employers who have made use of the service are highly satisfied with the results; however, a more detailed evaluation is required to review the range of employers/employees using the service and to fully assess the impact of the work.

8.21 Employment Workers do not perform a traditional placing service on behalf of their clients similar to that of Employment Services and Careers Services. They adopt an alternative approach based on the following two key principles:

- Individual clients should be judged on their own merits without the unnecessary label of ‘drug misuser’;

- a totally employer focussed approach which avoids any hidden agendas e.g. pressure to fill vacancies.

This is also influenced by a historical situation whereby the Community Drugs Teams and Probation Service identified that in Warwickshire many employers were resistant to engage and/or maintain individuals with drug-related problems. The importance of building trusting relationships with employers and employees was universally recognised. Case study 6 also highlights the importance of health and safety linked to clear policies and procedures for managing drug issues in the workplace.

- 8.22 Feedback from our interview sample shows that the work undertaken in this area is viewed positively by other agencies:

*“We can place individuals into jobs; however, we do not have the expertise to develop workplace drug policies or to deal with specific problems in the workplace.”*

*(Employment Service)*

*“They are working proactively with employers to help breakdown barriers and prejudices within the workplace.”*

*(Health Service)*

*“This project is highly innovative and the quality of materials for work with employers is excellent. I am not aware of any other similar approaches in the Midlands region or beyond.”*

*(Drugs Advisory Service, Birmingham)*

- 8.23 The two Employment Workers have co-authored a booklet on drugs in the workplace. This will be funded by Drugs Action Team (DAT) in Warwickshire and published very shortly.
- 8.24 Both workers have adopted a ‘proactive’ and ‘educative’ approach to informing and improving company policies and practices in relation to re-integrating drug misusers into the workplace. This is an example of good practice that could be promoted in other areas. Our research in the Midlands region suggests that Warwickshire has developed an innovative approach to employer work and the lessons learned could be cascaded to other areas in the UK.
- 8.25 Within a continuum of provision for drug misusers in Warwickshire, the ESP is fulfilling a vital role in helping to bridge the gap between adults who are outside the formal system seeking entry to employment and employers/employees.

## **9. Inter-Agency working and partnerships**

- 9.1 A wide range of local contacts has been established in the Warwickshire area. This has been achieved through extensive networking that has enabled the Employment Workers to build up their knowledge and awareness of local opportunities. As a result of strong working links with the Employment Services, Benefit Offices and Social Services both workers have developed flexible arrangements to fast track their clients onto the New Deal initiative. They have successfully accessed funds on behalf of their clients, such as the Community Care Alternative Fund to contribute towards particular training courses.

The Employment Workers are members of the New Deal Providers Forum in Warwickshire and regular meetings have taken place to discuss individual cases and agree a plan of action. This demonstrates good working links and provides a mechanism to contribute and learn from others. This has obvious benefits for clients. For example:

*“My Employment worker has links with all the agencies. It’s really helpful having one person to go to.”*  
(Client)

*“He knows my background and knows whether it will affect what I want. Careers and the Job Centre don’t”.*  
(Client)

- 9.2 Problems or issues relating to benefit entitlements is one of the main reasons given by clients for their lack of participation in work, training or education. One of the Employment Workers stated that:

*“We can spend hours sorting out benefits queries before any progress can be made because it is viewed by many of our clients as the main barrier to accessing anything else.”*  
(Employment Worker).

Strong links have been established with the local Benefit Offices.

## **10. Added-value**

### **Measuring success**

- 10.1 The success measures relating to the project (to date) have been primarily, though not exclusively, linked to the achievement of SRB quantitative targets. These appear to have provided a clear focus for the project. Powell and Sandham (2000) clearly demonstrate the earlier achievements. It is evident that there is a balance required between meeting SRB targets and investing in the development of the project. Given the complexity of client needs and time required to fully nurture individuals and support them to make successful transitions into the workplace, ‘soft outcomes’ measures are also required.

The Employment Workers stated:

*“We can measure part of our effectiveness by the fact that a lot of our clients do come back, even if they have relapsed. This shows that we have built up good relationships.”*  
(Employment Worker)

Further progress could also be measured using other factors such as:

- Nos. of agreed appointments and whether the client attends (especially those who have a track record of not keeping appointments)
- Clients who attend interviews with other local agencies including employers, training providers and voluntary organisations
- Clients who take some action as a result of working closely with their Employment Worker
- Employers and employees who refer to the ESP as a result of contact work on employers premises.

Our findings suggest that this data has not as yet been formally requested. In order to help sustain the project in the future more evidence is needed to assess the full impact of work.

- 10.2 Evidence prior to the formation of the project indicates that the project client group is likely to become increasingly marginalised from the world of work unless they have access to ongoing support. It was highlighted that:

*“Before the Employment Workers were in post, the CDTs had limited success in helping clients to enter the world of work, education or training.... We’d be lost without this service.”*  
(NHS Manager)

- 10.3 A brief analysis of the client data in Appendices 3 & 4 shows highly positive outcomes and significant achievements. Tables 1 & 2 clearly indicate that, with the support of the ESP, many clients have made successful transitions into work, training and personal development opportunities. It is also noted that, in some cases, the client is now ‘drugs free’. This is a major achievement, given in some cases, the degree of complexity of clients’ experiences and their perceived employment/training/personal development needs. Further follow-up work is needed to fully ascertain the extent to which these clients remain in employment/education/training.

**Table 1:Leamington Spa**

<u>Destinations</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Areas of progression</u>
Full-time/part-time/temporary employment	11	Caring/Nursing Home/Hotel Work/ Catering/ Sound Engineering/ Drug Counsellor/Generic Employment
Vocational/non-vocational programmes within Further Education Colleges	8	CLAIT/BTEC/A Levels/ C&G Photography
Vocational/leisure programmes with or without training	5	Forklift Truck Drivers Licence/ Folk Guitar lessons
Voluntary/Community Work	4	Princes Trust/ Counselling experience
On-going contact*	17	*The actual numbers are known to be far greater than this.
Her Majesty’s Prison	3	
Lost contact/moved away / no further contact	11	
Other: Amber Project and non-specified	4	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	

**Table 2:Rugby & North Warwickshire**

<u>Destinations</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Areas of progression</u>
Full-time/part-time/temporary employment	19	Tree Surgeon/Market Trader/ Chef/Waiter/Generic Employment
Vocational/non-vocational programmes within Further Education Colleges	16	Access to H.Ed/Drama Diploma / Equine Studies/Return to Learning/Business Studies/ Interior Design/Computing
Vocational/leisure programmes with or without training	17	Forklift Truck Drivers Licence/ New Deal/Focus Awareness/ Business Administration
Voluntary/Community Work	1	Care Home
On-going contact*	1*	The actual numbers are known to be far greater than this.
Her Majesty’s Prison	2	
Lost contact/moved away / no further contact	23	
Did not attend	30	
Other including rehabilitation*	19	This includes work with other local support agencies.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128</b>	

Differing recording styles make it difficult to fully compare the two sets of data. Furthermore, the project could benefit from gathering more data on client progress in particular to find out whether or not these individuals manage to retain their role and status within their chosen destination. This should be part of an agreed evaluation strategy to help assess the effectiveness of the work undertaken.

It would provide valuable data on 'what works' and 'why', as well as highlighting ineffective policies and practices. This could also contribute to a longitudinal survey of progress, barriers, issues and achievements specifically relating to this client group.

### **Knowledge, skills and expertise**

10.4 The key strengths identified in relation to the two Employment Workers is their ability to:

- *offer specialist impartial knowledge* of employment and training issues, benefit regulations and drug-related issues.
- *work effectively with individuals* outside the constraints of 'formal' or statutory services;
- *provide ongoing help and support* to assist individuals in their transition(s) to education, training and/or voluntary work;
- *form good working links with employers, training providers and other agencies* in the Warwickshire area.

Nearly all of the respondents indicated that both workers have "*street credibility*" and "*a good reputation*". It is clear that their work appears to be viewed as valuable:

*"These are two individuals who really do care about the clients they work with. Feedback from staff within the Community Drug Teams suggests that they add-value to our drug support services and provide that vital employment/training link. What's most important is that they also have street cred!"*

(Strategic Manager)

*"Working with drug misusers in more flexible ways to meet their identified needs is integral to the project"*

(Employment Support Worker)

10.5 From our research, it was noted that both Employment Workers are regularly updating their knowledge of drugs and drug-related issues mainly through their links within the Community Drug Teams. This is an aspect of good practice that should be continued. One of the Employment Workers is also currently undertaking a Diploma in Training & Development.

10.6 A key aspect of employment and training work is to help inform and guide individuals to make realistic decisions and to find suitable opportunities. One or both of the workers may benefit from undertaking part-time training in guidance such as an NVQ Level 3 or the Qualified Certificate in Guidance (QCG). This should be explored more fully, given funding may be available from local Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Partnerships.

10.7 Core competencies for Employment Support Workers could be further developed drawing on the findings detailed in paragraphs 10.4 to 10.6.

### **Good and interesting practice**

10.8 Examples of good and interesting practice are highlighted throughout the report. The following offers a brief summary of the salient points:

- Evidence of Employment Workers building relationships with individuals, developing rapport, increasing self-esteem and confidence (*para. 8.7*)

- ❑ The Employment Workers are willing to help clients take the first step towards achieving their desired goal. Often this involves accompanying them to relevant agencies to access appropriate services (*para. 8.8*)
- ❑ Clients are also supported to prepare curriculum vitae and speculative letters to assist them with their job search (*para. 8.10*)
- ❑ The setting of realistic and achievable goals to help equip clients with the confidence to succeed is central to the success of the project (*para. 8.12*)
- ❑ A variety of approaches have been used linked to awareness raising, development of workplace drug policies and information, advice and training for employers and employees on drug-related issues (*para. 8.16*)
- ❑ The ESP has exceeded the SRB targets (*para. 8.19*)
- ❑ Both Employment Workers have made a significant contribution to developing high quality materials such as newsletters, training manuals and company drug policies, as well as delivering training in the workplace on drug-related issues (*para. 8.20*)
- ❑ The ESP adopts an alternative approach based two key principles i) individual clients should be judged on their own merits without the unnecessary label of 'drug misuser' and ii) a totally employer focussed approach is designed to avoid any hidden agendas e.g. pressure to fill vacancies (*para. 8.22*)
- ❑ Extensive networking has enabled the Employment Workers to build up their knowledge and awareness of local opportunities and strong links have been established with the local Benefit Offices. Both regularly update their knowledge of drugs and drug-related issues through their links within the Community Drug Teams. (*paras. 9.1, 9.2 & 10.5*)
- ❑ The destination figures clearly indicate that, with the support of the ESP, many clients have made successful transitions into work, training and personal development opportunities. It is also noted that, in some cases, clients are now 'drugs free'. (*para. 10.3*)
- ❑ The ESP provides specialist impartial knowledge of employment and training issues, benefit regulations and drug-related issues (*para. 10.4*)

## **11. Sustainability**

- 11.1 The evidence above indicates that there is demand for intensive individualised support for drug misusers in Warwickshire. The project is filling a gap that seems to be missing.
- 11.2 The current staffing and ongoing cost of the ESP is approximately £59,500 plus VAT.<sup>6</sup> Given the SRB funding is due to end in March 2002, a review of the future plans for the project is necessary. This should involve key stakeholders with representation from the Probation Service, South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust and other relevant parties.

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<sup>6</sup> Information obtained from Warwickshire Probation Service and verified by South Warwickshire Community Care NHS Trust – 13/1/01

11.3 The Substance Misuse Initiative Steering Group should review the strategic plan for the work undertaken by the various Drugs Services in Warwickshire and consider the following key questions in relation to the ESP:

1. Will there continue to be a need for this work to be undertaken beyond the end of the project in 2002?
2. What are the crucial elements contributing to success and how can these be integrated into mainstream provision?
3. What will be the projects' terms of reference?
4. Who will fund/manage the project and what are the future priorities?
5. How can Employment Workers be best managed in order to maximise the full benefits of the role?
6. How can good and interesting practice be sustained and developed?
7. Where should the Employment Workers be located?
8. How can the learning points be disseminated more broadly across the region and at a national level?

**Options to consider in relation to the future funding and management of the ESP**

11.4 Warwickshire Probation Service may choose to continue with the current working arrangements; this has funding implications beyond 2001/2002.

*Our findings indicate that Warwickshire Probation Service has to consider the extent to which the Employment Workers make a contribution to their DTTO programme and if this is significant then it could potentially make a financial and management contribution.*

11.5 South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust currently employs one of the Employment Workers. The Health Authority via its joint commissioning strategy (including Police, Social Services & probation service) under the auspices of the Drug Action Team will have to decide which initiatives they intend to fund in the future. The South Warwickshire Combined NHS Trust indicated that they hoped to be in a position to fund the two Employment Worker existing posts in 2002.

*Our findings indicate that this is a viable option and has the additional benefit of retaining Employment Workers within CDTs. A drawback of this arrangement could be the potential isolation from Probation Service work; this requires careful consideration given the introduction of Drug Testing and Treatment Orders (DTTOs).*

11.6 Employment Services (ES) are responsible for placing activities and the delivery of key targets in relation to adults entering employment and training.

*Our findings indicate that the ES may be willing to agree a contract to support the continuation of the Employment Workers activities; however, there is a requirement that specific outcomes and targets would have to be agreed in line with ES goals. An initial temporary contract for 1-2 years may be available for Employment Workers to focus on Post Employment Support for 25 year old+ clients. From April 2001 onwards, ES can also provide match funding towards joint development bids. Further discussions are required to fully explore this option.*

- 11.7 The new Connexions Service is a universal system designed to offer support services for all young people between the age of 13-19 years old. Warwickshire & Coventry are one of the 16 pilot areas, selected by DfEE, to test out innovative approaches designed to re-engage young people in learning and work.

*Our findings indicate that Warwickshire Careers Service currently has two specialist Careers Advisers with designated responsibility for supporting drug misusers (13-19 year olds) in Warwickshire. There is potential to foster closer working relationships and to work in partnership. An analysis of the existing ESP client group for the two Employment Workers highlights that adults are the primarily target group (see 7.3)*

- 11.8 Information, advice & guidance (IAG) partnerships are part of a national framework designed to “improve access to high quality information, advice and guidance so that individuals can make the right learning and career choices.”<sup>7</sup>

*Our findings indicate that in order to attract funding the two Employment Workers would have to undertake an accredited guidance qualification. They are already working with the IAG Partnerships in Warwickshire.*

- 11.9 Learning Skills Councils are currently at an early stage of development. They may be interested in providing further support for the continuation and expansion of the project.

*Our contacts with Government Office for the West Midlands confirmed that this is an option to consider. However, it is too early to assess the level of funds available and priorities in relation to supporting drug misusers.*

- Other government Initiatives linked to the social exclusion agenda could be usefully explored particularly in relation to the work of the Centre for Social Inclusion, London.

- 11.10 The main challenge is to explore more fully the range of options outlined above. There are a variety of organisations that could legitimately have an interest in furthering the work of this project. It is clear that there is great potential to pool funds at a local level to help sustain the highly innovative achievements of this project. Partners will need to find new ways of gaining the co-operation and support of local agencies to ensure that good practice is sustained. The general consensus amongst respondents was that there would be clear benefits in having a single organisation responsible for the planning, management and development of the ESP. The other alternative is for relevant partner organisations to have clear terms of reference, well defined roles and responsibilities which are clearly communicated and managed in relation to the agreed priorities and goals of the Employment Workers. It will also be essential to ensure that future structures do not lose the focus on employment/training and career development issues

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<sup>7</sup> Baroness Blackstone 1999.

## 12. Recommendations

1. The current dual management arrangement should be reviewed in order to assess its effectiveness and to develop a strategic plan for 2001/2002 (*para. 6.4*).
2. Employment Workers should continue to be based within the Community Drug Teams (*para. 6.5*).
3. Mentoring and supervision of the two Employment Workers is required to review policies and practices and to identify specific training needs (*para. 7.11*).
4. A review of policy in relation to the follow up clients after they have entered employment/training or voluntary work should take place between the Employment Workers and the Project Managers (*para. 7.13*).
5. A uniform system for recording client data, including progress/outcomes should be developed. It will be vital to have a clear overview of how the data can be used most effectively to inform the future development of the ESP (*para 7.14*).
6. Agreement on the future priorities in relation to the balance between client and employer work is required (*para. 7.19*).
7. The ESP should be broadly promoted at national and regional levels to highlight this innovative approach, especially in relation to work with employers (*para. 7.21*).
8. An evaluation strategy is required which includes 'soft and hard' outcomes to help measure and assess the effectiveness of the project (*para.9.1*).
9. The option of Employment Workers gaining a formal qualification in guidance should be explored more fully. This may assist in attracting funding for information, advice and guidance work (*para.9.5*).
10. A meeting should take place between strategic managers and practitioners involved with the project to explore more fully the options for developing and sustaining the ESP within and beyond 2001/2002 (*paras. 10.3, 10.10*).
11. Further research is required to fully ascertain the impact of their work with employers and employees in the workplace (*para. 10.4*)