

CASE STUDY - ACCESS TO SERVICES

Introduction

Ballyhoura Development want to increase the numbers of clients we work with, to take up the range of progression opportunities available to them. This is achieved in two ways:

1. Outreaching the delivery of our services, to key areas of concentrated disadvantage in the market towns and across areas with dispersed rural disadvantage.
2. Delivering a range of targeted information activities and events.

The need for the two pronged approach to information provision relates back to:

1. The CSO and pobal socio economic data, highlighting the key areas of disadvantage.
2. The area settlement pattern of peri urban, market towns and weak and isolated rural communities.
3. The low levels of awareness and access to services amongst the LCDP target groups.
4. The limited number of main stream services based in the area, for example training, social welfare, transport and at a time of unprecedented demand no Local Employment Service.
5. Engagement with and the desire to support the most disadvantaged and marginalised to break the cycle of disadvantage.

The approach of highlighting information on services in a coordinated manner and by having outreach offices close to target communities is crucial in that it:

1. Greatly enhances the client engagement process.
2. Enables greater awareness, greater accessibility and greater trust for clients.
3. Leads to increased client uptake of services and supports.

Activities

An example of how the service is delivered in practice may be useful to highlight the linkages between the research, consultations, the delivery approach and the target clients.

There are approximately 8,200 people unemployed across the Ballyhoura Development area. Ballyhoura Development organised a 'Ballyhoura Employment and Enterprise Seminar' in Mitchelstown on Thursday 22nd October.

Based on consultations with unemployed clients and support services operating the area the seminar was aimed at two groups of targets clients:

1. Long term unemployed people.
2. Unemployed young people.

Preparation for the seminar took on board research and feedback from consultations with all stakeholders including:

1. Long term unemployed individuals.
2. Young unemployed individuals.
3. Local employers.
4. Employment support agencies.

Feedback highlighted:

1. Older job seekers negative experience of sending out CV's and not progressing to interview.
2. Younger job seekers not having any employment experience beyond education.
3. Employers limited knowledge of employment activation programmes and experiences of having jobs available and not receiving suitable CV's.
4. Employment support agencies seeking quality engagement with clients.

The 'Ballyhoura Employment and Enterprise Seminar' event was promoted through a variety of channels including:

1. An eight week targeted press release and local radio campaign.
2. Flyers, newsletters and posters.
3. Online social media including the Ballyhoura Development twitter, facebook and blog.
4. Information and engagement with stakeholders for two months leading to the event including:
 1. Ballyhoura Development Employment client database.
 2. Local Employers.
 3. Community, youth and business groups.
 4. Individuals and families in key target estates in Mitchelstown.
 5. Employment Support Agencies.

Lessons Learned

A key agenda for the event was to be positive, be engaging and to have jobs, internships and training places available. A great effort was placed on:

1. Engaging with employers prior to the event with potential to recruit staff, offer graduate internship opportunities and speak at the event to bring employers and job seekers closer.
2. Engaging intensively with key groups and estates in Mitchelstown to facilitate long term unemployed participation.
3. Preparation of information on a comprehensive list of local training places from unaccredited to FETAC L 5 through to third level opportunities.
4. Approaching clients progressed into graduate internships to provide insights and motivation from their experiences of progression.
5. Creating facilitated exercises to focus participants on developing and communicating their unique story for potential networking and interview situations.

Conclusions

The outcomes of the event include:

1. 170 unemployed individuals attended, 130 of whom were long term unemployed.
2. Long term unemployed men and women in the 40-50 age bracket formed the majority of the group with young unemployed people and early school leavers making up the remainder.
3. The absence of those in the 25-40 age bracket was noticeable highlighting the increasing emigration and migration to the larger urban areas.
4. 15 graduate placements were created in the local area prior to the event.
5. Local employers attended the event with 33 jobs on offer.
6. 25 external agencies and training businesses took part to promote their service and supports.
7. There were 20 places on a FETAC L 5 Antique Restoration Programme, 14 places on a FETAC L 5 Outdoor Recreation Programme, 14 places on a FETAC L 5 Sales Representative Course, 40 places on FETAC L 5 Health Care Courses along with a variety of short term unaccredited programmes and the range of third level spring board programmes. Ballyhoura Development also received an offer of one free place on a four year degree in child and adolescence care at the Irish College of Humanities and Sciences.

The event created a lot of follow up one to one work with existing and new long term unemployed clients.