



## A Strong Community: Building Resilience in Newham

Consultation response from Careers Development Group,  
June 2011

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Welfare to work charity Careers Development Group (CDG) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the London Borough of Newham's stakeholder consultation '*A Strong Community: Building Resilience in Newham*'. CDG supports the council's aims of building the resilience of Newham's residents, communities and economy. Through our delivery of innovative solutions to tackle worklessness via the Work Programme, CDG will make a positive contribution to the development of Newham's resilience.
- 1.2 CDG is submitting an open submission to Newham Council which outlines how through the Work Programme we will support the development of the personal resilience of Newham's residents, in addition to the economic and community resilience of the borough. Our submission focuses on how each of these areas of resilience can be tackled through CDG's work in tackling worklessness
- 1.3 CDG believes the personal resilience of Newham's residents can be developed through empowering them to make their own choices about their work life and careers. This includes maximising their talent, skill and energy to the choice of sectors, jobs and professions that forge a career in. Additionally resilience can be built by working in partnership with specialist organisations to tackle the barriers and develop the specific skills each jobseeker needs to secure and sustain work.
- 1.4 Community resilience in Newham also can be developed through harnessing the hidden expertise within each community and developing it via our CDG Volunteers scheme to enhance the level of employability support to those who are unemployed. We want to give people with skills and experience in Newham to be able to play a role in helping people in Newham back into work and helping them stay there.
- 1.5 CDG is committed to investing in and developing the communities where we work. Through our innovative Stepping Stone Employment initiative, CDG will invest in the creation and development of local social enterprises. This will not only create further employment opportunities, but will also diversify and develop the business base of Newham.

## **2 Overview of Careers Development Group**

- 2.1 CDG is a leading charity that seeks to help individuals who have been out of work for a considerable amount of time, including those faced with multiple barriers, to find and sustain employment. Our jobseekers include those claiming the main out of work benefits such as those on Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefits and Income Support. We provide our jobseekers with training, work experience and the support necessary to move into and sustain employment and to achieve a better quality of life.
- 2.2 The charity, with just over 350 employees, currently operates from 26 centres across London, the South East and the East Midlands. In 2010/11, CDG supported 27,000 people on their journey back into work.
- 2.3 CDG provides employment programmes as both a prime contractor and subcontractor including New Deal, Flexible New Deal, Pathways to Work, Work Choice and European Social Fund contracts.
- 2.4 In April 2011, CDG was selected as the prime contractor for the Work Programme in London East, and as part of our strategic alliance with international welfare to work provider, MAXIMUS, are the prime provider in London West and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Through these contracts CDG will support over 97,000 jobseekers over the lifetime of the Work Programme.
- 2.5 As part of our Work Programme delivery, CDG will be opening a new delivery centre in Stratford this year. Although a new provider to Newham, CDG brings transferable expertise in supporting jobseekers into and through employment from nine other London boroughs, many of which share similar demographic characteristics to Newham. For example, Croydon, Greenwich and Lewisham also have similar high levels of youth unemployment than the London average, which CDG tackles on a daily basis through our New Deal delivery. Our delivery in Newham will further be supported by the local charity Community Links. Together we will support almost 6,000 jobseekers from the borough on their journey into sustained employment over the Work Programme's duration.
- 2.6 CDG is also an innovative charity, which continuously works to find new ways to enhance the personal capabilities of our jobseekers. In addition to the services it is funded to provide, CDG provides additional services as part of its charitable benefit. In 2010/11, this included launching the Expert Volunteer Initiative, which is designed to provide jobseekers with additional support to improve their chances of success in gaining and sustaining employment. Following the launch, a national working group has been established to oversee the initiative, with the ultimate aim of recruiting 50,000

volunteers to take part. CDG will also be running its own volunteers scheme (called CDG Volunteers) to enhance the level of employability support to those who are unemployed. We want to give people with skills and experience in Newham to be able to play a role in helping people in Newham into work and helping them stay there.

### **3. Personal Resilience**

- 3.1 Building the personal resilience of each of our jobseekers is the central to the success of CDG's Work Programme delivery. To CDG, the Work Programme is about more than moving a jobseeker into any job. It is about developing the skills and capabilities of each jobseeker to enable them to secure and sustain work, in addition to developing their confidence to deal with any temporary setbacks throughout the course of their work life and careers.
- 3.2 To effectively develop each jobseeker's personal resilience, CDG is working in partnership with a diverse range of support organisations offering Work Programme jobseekers specialist support services. In addition to engaging in jobsearch, skills workshops, and vocational training via CDG's bespoke e-learning platform, jobseekers will be able to access support services tailored to their specific needs. Whether a jobseeker is facing a problem with debt, substance abuse or would like to learn how to effectively manage their health condition, CDG will work jointly with both jobseekers and support organisations to design effective solutions that break down barriers to work.
- 3.3 By empowering jobseekers through their active participation in the development of their Work Programme jobseeker journey, and by working in partnership with specialist organisations, CDG provide jobseekers with the foundations on which to build their personal resilience, and take control of their careers.

### **4. Community Resilience**

- 4.1 CDG fully supports Newham's aims to access the untapped expertise and resources of members of its local communities to develop the resilience of the borough.
- 4.2 CDG itself has recognised the wealth of under utilised potential within communities across the UK and had launched CDG Volunteers (see 2.6).
- 4.3 CDG has also incorporated the need for expert volunteers into our Work Programme delivery. We will be recruiting professional volunteers from across East London's communities to provide additional one to one mentoring and support to the Work Programme jobseekers furthest away from the labour market. This will include recruiting volunteers from Newham to support Newham's Work Programme jobseekers. By building a strong volunteering base across the borough, CDG will

contribute towards the development of strong and resilient social networks across Newham.

4.4 Furthermore, CDG envisages our delivery centre in Newham being transformed into a multi-purpose community hub. In addition to out of hours job clubs, CDG will be able to offer its facilities for community usage- further contributing to the strengthening and the resilience of local communities. CDG does not view itself as just a welfare to work provider, the charity views itself as a fundamental part of the local communities where it operates.

## **5. Economic Resilience**

5.1 Investment in East London through flagship regeneration programmes such as Crossrail, Westfield Stratford, the Excel centre, the Olympics and the continued development of Canary Wharf has led to consistent economic growth in the region. Oxford Economics in a recent report has highlighted that the region has averaged a 1.5% growth rate over the last decade, despite the recession<sup>1</sup>.

5.2 However, this growth has not trickled down to all of East London's residents. Newham has one of the lowest employment rates in London at just 56%. In addition, Newham has a small enterprise base, with just 19 businesses in the borough per 1000 residents, compared with the London average of 44 businesses per 1000 residents<sup>2</sup>.

5.3 In CDG's experience, harder to help jobseekers with the most significant barriers to working are still experiencing significant labour market disadvantage. A lack of vocational qualifications and recent work history prevents many of our jobseekers, particularly those aged 18-24, from accessing local employment opportunities.

5.4 CDG will work hard to ensure Newham's jobseekers are able to benefit from the growing number of employment opportunities across London. In addition to helping communities where we will deliver Work Programme to have a diverse and resilient local economy and business base, CDG will be supporting the creation and development of social enterprises. In the London East contract package area this will be through our Stepping Stone Employment initiative throughout the duration of the Work Programme.

5.5 Stepping Stone Employment will offer Work Programme jobseekers elementary work experience and employment opportunities in local social enterprises. Jobseekers participating in placements will be provided with 'on the job support' from an experienced Advisor to enhance their capabilities to develop the employability skills

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford Economics- Assessing the Economic Potential of the Golden Triangle, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Newham- Economic Development Strategy 2010

demanded by employers in the local labour market. Often these elementary opportunities provide jobseekers with the essential work experience that they lack, creating a stepping stone on which to progress to the next stage of their careers. The interpersonal employability skills developed in these opportunities also enable jobseekers to develop the resilience to adapt to different working situations.

- 5.6 Additionally, as a charity CDG is committed to reinvesting some of any eventual surplus back into the communities where we work. By supporting the creation and development of social enterprises across East London, we are not only increasing the employment opportunities available to Work Programme jobseekers, but we will also be increasing the economic resilience of the communities where we work through an expansion of their business base. CDG is particularly interested in supporting enterprises in local growth sectors, particularly in East London's creative industries, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss further with Newham Council how we can best support the resilience of the Newham local labour market.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 By working in partnership with our jobseekers, specialist support organisations, members of Newham's local communities and by investing in the development of community social enterprises, CDG will actively contribute the development of resilience across Newham throughout the duration of the Work Programme.
- 6.2 For further information, please contact Mark Brooks at [mark.brooks@cdguk.org](mailto:mark.brooks@cdguk.org), on 020 7811 3164, or at Careers Development Group, Carlton Plaza, 111 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 2TJ.

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