

# Families First

Employment/Training  
update August 2013



**BRADFORD**  
working in partnership

The Government announced in March 2013 a new drive to support the Families First programme with the secondment of Jobcentre Plus staff into the programme. Karen Foster Jobcentre manager has been seconded since April 2013 and will be supported by two Jobcentre Plus outreach workers to raise the profile of how adults can be supported into training and work. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith has stated

‘There are thousands of individuals and families in the UK living as troubled families blighted by crime, worklessness, and truancy. Worklessness can be a particular issue for some of these families and helping them get and keep a job can be vital in turning their lives around, bringing improved structure and stability with increased aspirations and confidence.’

‘Work can also enable parents to act as role models for their children, as children growing up in workless households are more likely to experience worklessness themselves.

Jobcentre plus advisors will now be working with families to offer more targeted support to those who have failed by the system and where no-one is working or there is a history of worklessness across generations.’

Paul O’Hara Families First manager states

‘A key aspect of Families First is supporting families out of poverty and off benefits –into training and work. This has not normally been something most children’s staff have focused on, but the impact of low aspirations ,several generations of families who haven’t been in work and the reductions in welfare benefits make this a crucial part of trying to improve the lives and outcomes of families in Bradford. This new initiative really helps us tackle this issue, building on the skills and experience of Jobcentre Plus staff and Families First to really deliver improved joined up working.’

**“ There are no jobs out there” ! – how many times have you heard this? I certainly wish I had a pound for every time I heard it! Karen Foster, Jobcentre Plus manager.** Jobs are out there; it is knowing where to look, having the right skills and making sure you are flexible with what jobs are available in the local area

Did you know that for example there are over 20,575 job vacancies within a 20 mile radius of Bradford being advertised on Jobcentre Plus Universal Jobmatch site, 1,600 in construction,2,400 in driving, 3,000 available in care and over 950 in security.

Since starting in April 2013 I have found 44 people who are part of Families First who have gone into work. This is good news and shows that jobs are being secured by local people and that some of the barriers they have experienced are tackled.

The most successful wards have been Tong ( 6), Keighley West and Windhill/Wrose (4 each), Bowling and Barkerend, Keighley East, Little Horton (3 each), Keighley Central, Bolton and Undercliffe, Bradford Moor, Great Horton, Shipley and Royds (2 each) and many other wards with 1 each.

## **WHAT HELP IS ON OFFER TO ADULTS INTERESTED IN GETTING INTO TRAINING & WORK ?**

There a range of practical courses and support to help people build their confidence and skills to gain employment and training. Each person has different needs and barriers, so we can arrange for a Personal Adviser to discuss what is available with them if they want to start moving forward and plan their journey with them.

People are often not aware of how much better off working they will be if they come off benefits I can arrange for a dedicated Personal Adviser to do a better off calculation with families to show them how much better off they could be taking up work financially, In addition work helps with self esteem, social interaction and providing a good role model for their children.

For some adults a small step on this journey is to improve their social confidence through volunteering. Families First are actively encouraging families to volunteer with good results and positive feedback from the families.

### **Feedback from families include :-**

Families First worked with a family with a young man aged 19 who left school without any qualifications, preferring to stay in his bedroom all day. Through working with him, the keyworker has got him onto an apprenticeship where he will study 3 days per week for English/Maths and 2 days work experience in a factory setting.

Families First worked with a family and discovered the mother did not like to leave the home due to low confidence. With the support of her keyworker she expressed interest in starting to look at work. A joint visit was arranged with an Outreach Adviser from Jobcentre Plus and they have agreed a package of support which includes mother attending a job skills course in Keighley to help her with her job hunting skills and she is starting to move forward

Families First has worked with a family where the mother has decided she wants more than being at home with the children. She has been supported to start voluntary work 1 full day in a shop in retail working which has given her the confidence to seek further help and guidance. She has also been referred to a short course for help with job search skills and has been engaging with her Jobcentre Plus Outreach Personal adviser for extra help.

Families First is working with a family where the mother has had a stroke which had a massive impact on family, including that she was embarrassed to smile ,felt worthless and insecure. The keyworker worked with mum on her self esteem, took her to dentist to sort out her missing teeth and built up her confidence. Over time she has struggled to manage herself and debts that have built up, paperwork including benefit notifications were left unopened and her key worker has helped her sort this out. Mum can now deal with issues rather than put her head in the sand and she has started attending some training sessions on Arts and Crafts in a Community Centre every week. She has also expressed interest in volunteering in the café.

Families First worked with a single mum with 2 teenagers, who were having attendance issues at school, one not attending school and one at a PRU. Through working with them, mum has secured a part time job and both teenagers have been accepted onto courses, one on a level 2 carpentry/joinery course and the other on a beauty course.

Families First is working with a mum and dad with 10 children, a couple of children were having attendance at school issues and mum and dad were not interested in doing anything. The keyworker has worked with them on these issues and the children's attendance has improved. Mum is now volunteering once per week and has attended a course to develop confidence, self esteem and create a CV. She has also applied to volunteer for a project working with young people with learning difficulties. Dad has set up football in the local community and is applying for funding for kits for the children. They are making steps towards their goals.

## WHATS HAPPENING NEXT?

I have been raising the profile of Interserve who deliver the European Social Fund Troubled Families provision in Bradford. This is currently under used and is aimed at helping our families move forward into work and training. Improved links have been established with staff visiting the centre to see what's on offer. This has resulted in an increase in referrals.

I am also looking at extending the number of outreach support sessions in local communities based at Families First commissioned services sites. The aim is that workers could bring families to discuss work/training needs and also to offer support to key workers if they need guidance through one to one discussions. Several of our partners have taken up this offer including Barnardo's, Prospects, Brathay Project 6 and Keyhouse .

Welfare reform -Benefit Cap – this will be implemented by the end of September in Bradford. Early indications are that over 400 families are affected and will lose some of all of their housing benefit. We are in the process of identifying Families First families affected by the changes and are arranging for them to be visited to make sure they are all aware of what is happening and how they are affected. The way to improve their circumstances will be by securing work and claiming tax credits which would result in the benefit cap not affecting them. I will be supporting staff after visits and offering advice and guidance which will help these people try and secure work.

Money Management courses – We are all aware that many Families First families have difficulties with either debt or managing their money, so I'm keen to offer this support to families.  
Karen Foster Jobcentre plus manager

## Free help

**Interserve** provide free employment help for eligible families and individuals (which is funded by European social fund ESF).

Can provide up to 12 months of support

Provide help with:-

**Training opportunities**  
**Cv writing**  
**Confidence and motivation,**  
**Developing I.T. skills,**  
**Help with English and maths,**  
**Securing work or voluntary placements**

Provide bus fares to courses and pay for child care.

For more info contact Karen Foster or  
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## Families First Programme - Contact details

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