

Helping Harrow's adults back into work

Harrow Council has successfully won a bid to fund an outreach service, which will encourage working age residents in five areas in the borough where worklessness is highest back into employment.

The council won funding for £250,000 from the London Development Agency European Social Fund Co-Financing Programme for their initiative (XCITE) – a fantastic achievement as there were only 4 successful bids in the outreach category across the whole of London. A further £150,000 has since been won from West London Working to provide the Xcite project with a total of £400,000.

The XCITE scheme is set to be rolled out this summer and will work in partnership with more than ten organisations; including social landlords, local charities, lone parent groups and local tenants and residents associations. The project is initially funded for two years and if successful the council hopes to extend it for a further year.

A team of 3 Xcite advisers will support and help adults secure work placements, voluntary work, develop their skills through training, addressing barriers to work such as providing financial advice and information on affordable childcare. Outreach workers will help to identify families and individuals who could benefit from this support. The outreach service will be run from the Rayners Lane Beacon Community Centre as well as children's centres, community centres and extended schools.

As an example of why this project is needed In September 2007, a Harrow College survey found that 1 in 10 households on the Rayners Lane Estate had not been in paid employment for the past 5 years. The other areas chosen have on average more than 20% of adults not in work.

Barry Macleod-Cullinane, portfolio holder for adult services, said:

“The best way of getting people back into work is through joining up services in a local area and removing the barriers that prevent people securing employment. This means ensuring that housing, health, children's and other services all play a part in helping people into work.

“The XCITE programme is an excellent example of different organisations working in partnership to support a vulnerable section of our community.”

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

- Harrow Council is working in partnership with Harrow Association for the Disabled, Mind in Harrow, One Parents Families/Gingerbread, Brent and Harrow Education Business Service, Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations, Rayners Lane Estate Tenants and Residents Association, Cottesmore and Woodlands Estate Tenants Association, Pinner Estate tenants Association and Harrow Somali Women's Advice Group.