

Mapping and Assessment of Health and Employability Networks for North Lanarkshire Council Equal Access Development Partnership

What were we asked to do?

North Lanarkshire Council, as lead Partner for the Equal Access Development Partnership, commissioned us to carry out a mapping and assessment of health and employability networks and partnerships across four local authority areas: North Lanarkshire, City of Edinburgh, West Lothian, and Stirling.

How did we approach the research?

We used a combination of methods to approach the work:

- Desk research to contextualise the study, examine key documents and identify key local stakeholders.
- Telephone and face-to-face interviews with around 20 key stakeholders in each area, to find out details of relevant networks/partnerships, and explore stakeholder's experiences of these.
- Developing a mapping tool to illustrating the networks and partnerships in each area, and their lines of accountability to local and national strategies and organisations
- We attended a selection of meetings of health and employability networks and partnerships in each area, to enhance our understanding of how they worked.
- A series of focus groups were held with local stakeholders in each area to discuss initial findings and facilitate discussion regarding the future of health and employability partnership working.

What did we find?

We found that all four areas were currently in a state of flux in relation to the health and employability agenda with the introduction of Pathways to Work, new groups focusing on certain aspects of the health and employability agenda, and the ongoing review of health and employability structures. This was impacting on the cohesion of the networks and partnerships to varying degrees. In our report we:

- Identified the strengths and weaknesses of the health and employability networks/partnerships in each area, in

particular examining how they were supporting and developing inter-agency working;

- Highlighted key areas for improvement; and
- Provided recommendations and implications for future inter-agency working.