

# Wansbeck District Council

## *Evaluation of Wansbeck Works!*



### What our client wanted

Wansbeck has one of the highest levels of enduring unemployment in the UK. To turn this around needs innovative approaches that tackle a culture of low aspiration and benefit dependency. Wansbeck District Council has brought together all the organisations with an interest in supporting people back into work and wellbeing, to create a unique 'no wrong door' approach to helping Wansbeck's people get into work. The partners wanted an evaluation that examined the impact of this approach.

### What Frontline did

Frontline designed an evaluation framework that focused equally on:

- the impact of Wansbeck Works! on beneficiaries' employability
- the extent to which the partnership approach and culture delivered added value for beneficiaries and strategic added value for the regeneration of the district

Frontline has worked with the partnership since the inception of Wansbeck Works! and will continue to evaluate on an ongoing basis until the end of the funding period in April 2008. Our method includes analysis of beneficiary outcome data, interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries and regular interviews and focus groups with operational staff and stakeholders regarding the process. We are using a cultural mapping tool to examine the cultural changes driven by the partnership 'no wrong door' approach, to identify lessons about how employability support is delivered in areas with intractable unemployment problems. This cultural evaluation is enabling Frontline and the partners to identify the factors which drive up success for Wansbeck Works! and those which act as barriers to progress; this information will be used to influence policy.

### What difference we made

The evaluation has revealed a number of challenges in terms of partnership working, which stem from different organisational cultures and structures. Surfacing these at an early stage has allowed the partnership to acknowledge and address them before they adversely affect the aspirations of Wansbeck Works! Frontline's input has already enabled the partners to identify the most common pathways of support and support delivery staff in developing the operational relationships and new pathways that will make the difference in addressing their clients' employability needs.

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