

MONITORING VISIT REPORT: Drive Forward Foundation 11449

<p>1.1 Date of visit: 16 April 2015</p>	<p>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson</p>	<p>1.3 People met with: Met with: Martha Wansbrough (Director), Anton Babey (Operations Director), Sophie Hytner (Programme Coordinator) and Michael Brosnan (Employment Consultant)</p>
<p>1.4 Programme Area & Outcomes: Positive Transitions to Independent Living: More care-leavers taking up educational or employment opportunities & making positive choices about their lives</p>		
<p>1.5 Purpose of the award: £87,100 over three years (£30,900; £27,800; £28,400) for a full-time Head of Drive Programme and the purchase and installation of a monitoring database.</p>		
<p align="center">MONITORING INFORMATION</p>		
<p>2.1 Project Outcome 1: To deliver the Drive Training programme, offering 2-3 sessions per week in 6 weekly blocks of practical employability skills such as CV writing and interview techniques</p> <p>Progress made: In the first year of grant DFF reports that it worked with 135 young people from 21 London boroughs through 100 training sessions. The charity states it helped 122 young people into employment, education or training. The charity has worked with two Programme Coordinators since the City Bridge Trust started its funding. Sophie Hytner (the current post-holder) is credited with making the Drive Programme more focused and taking steps to ensure that there are more apprenticeship and training opportunities at the end of each 6 week scheme for participants. Although the charity makes clear that it cannot guarantee a job for anyone starting the scheme, it does aim to provide new opportunities where possible. The current 6 week programme is felt to be sufficient time to allow young people to experience positive benefit from the charity’s work and contacts.</p> <p>Drive would like to receive a greater number of referrals from Job Centres and Leaving Care Teams. Numbers can fluctuate between courses, and there are times when the dynamic of a group can suffer if participant numbers fall too low.</p>		
<p>2.2 Project Outcome 2: Investment in a monitoring database</p> <p>Progress made: Drive worked with the charitable foundation Zing to design and implement its new monitoring database. The database allows for improved record keeping, enabling the charity to keep much better track of the soft outcomes achieved by clients. Drive is receiving support to develop its theory of change so that it can track the effectiveness of its intervention allowing it to demonstrate cost-savings and sustainability to possible commissioners. This is part of Drive’s work to transition from grant-funding to statutory contracts.</p>		

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

Run from Bridge House Estates-owned premises in the City, Drive Forward Foundation (Drive) runs regular 6 weekly programmes for care leavers. These initiatives provide employability support, offering practical workplace skills together with facilities to search for work. The charity has established good connections with several borough-based Leaving Care Teams. These teams, together with Job Centres, refer clients to the programme and the charity aims to have 8 participants on each 6 week Drive scheme.

Each new participant receives a needs assessment and works with Drive to develop a tailored employment support programme. The charity supports client towards sustainable employment and, in addition to the Drive Programme, tries to arrange work placements with a variety of corporates. Saatchi and Saatchi, Goldman Sachs and Clifford Chance are some of the commercial partners working with Drive.

I attended a late afternoon discussion led by the Programme Coordinator and a conflict-mediation charity called Forward Thinking. Eight young people participated, most of whom were actively involved with the discussion, but two sat silently throughout. Reasons behind non-participation were discussed later. The meeting marked the half-way point for Drive's current programmes, and Accenture had visited the previous day to work with the young people on CV preparation.

Overall, Drive impresses as a thoughtful organisation which is using the City Bridge Trust funding to develop its offer and to explore statutory contracts. It has built a good network of contacts with referral agencies, and is starting discussions with the City's Community and Children's Services team to investigate collaborative working.

The building the charity works from has been scheduled for redevelopment and the organisation must find alternative premises. The search for somewhere central and accessible is not straightforward given rising commercial rents. Work has begun in satellite offices in Barnet and Haringey, but the charity has a small staff team and it is not currently feasible to offer work in each London borough.