



NRF Update

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Funding Update

By Kerry Corbett, NRF Manager

NRF Round 3 programme was developed to deliver interventions to contribute to the neighbourhood renewal agenda for the period April 2006 - March 2008. The current programme has had, at its heart, a focus on worklessness, health inequalities and community safety, as well as specific resources to support community and voluntary sector projects and infrastructure.

The Comprehensive spending review announcement indicated some new arrangements regarding funding for neighbourhood renewal. The government has acknowledged that considerable progress has been made in many of the most disadvantaged areas but recognises that more work needs to be done and has highlighted the need to turn around the disadvantages deprived areas suffer in terms of weak economies, high levels of worklessness, low skills and insufficient enterprise.

Whilst we await further details and guidance as to the government's expectations regarding this approach, the NRF sub-group and the NRF team are committed to ensuring that the NRF Round 3 programme continues to deliver its activities and will work with projects, partners and services to explore the succession arrangements identified within the appraisal process for each current intervention.

Employability Theme

By Barbara Gates, Assistant NRF Manager

As part of the ongoing commitment to projects within the Round 3 programme, the NRF Team have organised a theme meeting for all projects which have a strategic link to employability.

The purpose is to primarily assess the progress which has been made with individual projects around sustainability and mainstreaming.

Opportunities will be given to project officers to share good practice and to highlight any issues which they are experiencing, particularly around gaps in service provision and cross referral methods.

The meeting will take place on Monday 5th November 2007 from 9.30am until 12.30pm at the Mansion House, Jesmond.

QMR Workshops

By Tina Symm, Monitoring Officer

During the summer months the NRF team hosted a number of Workshops to update and refresh Project Officers on the improved procedures introduced to monitor project performance and outline the roles and responsibilities for the NRF Team, Theme Leads and the Newcastle Partnership. Feedback was very positive on all aspects of the sessions with attendees commenting on the benefits of:

- meeting the team
- understanding the structure and links with themes
- the reasons for monitoring and the requirements of audit
- discussing and receiving guidance on completing the quarterly forms
- the opportunity to network with other project officers.

Recently a number of project officers have requested that another event be arranged to introduce new members of staff to the forms and reporting requirement of NRF.

A half day Workshop has been organised for Tuesday 30th October at the City Learning Centre, Westgate Community College and will concentrate on Quarterly Monitoring Reports, Invoicing and reporting requirements. The event has been designed to ensure that all delegates have an opportunity to try out completing a QMR and to get answers to your specific questions as well as to make links with other projects within the programme.

If you are involved in preparing monitoring returns for an NRF project and have not already attended a training session, further details are available by contacting Christine James on 0191 277 7868.

“A half day Workshop has been organised for Tuesday 30th October at the City Learning Centre, Westgate Community College.”

Media Workshops

By Colin Stephenson, Communications Manager

Following on from the summer's round of QMR sessions, feedback from a number of NRF project leads highlighted the need for help around promoting the good work of their projects and for sharing news with the local community.

A great way, and probably the best as it's free, to achieve these aims is to use the medium of Public Relations. If we have a 'newsworthy' story or an event we want to publicise, then why not write a Press Release and send this out to the local press in the hope that it is published.

Most, if not all, of NRF projects will generate positive 'newsworthy' stories. This is due to NRF being public funds and the fact projects produce outputs that hopefully benefit the local community i.e. tackling bullying and obesity in Newcastle's schools, or getting local people back into employment.

Project teams all work extremely hard and we should be keen to tell the local media of the great work being undertaken and share this with the wider community.

As a result of all the above, I decided to stage a series of Media Workshops where attending NRF project leads took part in a training session totally focused on giving them an overview of PR and the mediums used to generate positive publicity.

Thankfully (phew!!!), the feedback from the sessions has been really positive and I just wanted to reiterate that I am available (as a free resource) to help you with generating good PR for your projects.

If any of you were unable to attend, but are still interested, then if you get in contact with me on 0191 277 1659, I will look to arrange another session.

Publicity and Marketing

By Wendy Hodgson, Assistant NRF Manager

NRF QMR training workshops were held in June and July this year. During one of the facilitated sessions project officers took part in an exercise to share their thoughts on the following hypothetical statement:

"The NRF process has developed strong working relationships and support mechanisms to enable projects to deliver against thematic targets and improve service delivery"

"Most, if not all, of NRF projects will generate positive 'newsworthy' stories."

Project Officers were asked to consider the statement and then give their views on what we are doing well, what they believe can be improved, and to give their suggestions for improvement.

One of the most consistent comments was the need to improve communications including:

- Publicity opportunities
- Facilitating ways of sharing good practice
- Opportunities for sharing news with the local community
- Support with publicity requirements
- Better information about NRF procedures and requirements

In response to the suggestions made at the workshops the NRF team have asked the NRF Sub-group to fund and support:

The production of a Neighbourhood Renewal Newsletter in Newcastle

The production of the newsletter will assist project officers by giving them a forum to share their good practice and good news stories. It will inform the local community as to how NRF is being used to address issues in their local area, and invite them to contact the team with their views. It will improve communication and community engagement.

Regeneration Festival

In previous years the NRF Team have been involved in highly successful events which have been held annually.

The event has been used to celebrate the role that programmes managed by NRF sub-group have played in delivering regeneration across the city of Newcastle.

It is proposed that we hold another Regeneration Festival to take place in March 2008 at St James Park.

Celebrate the Success of NRF Brochure

It is recommended that a one off glossy 8 page brochure be produced by the NRF team to celebrate and communicate the work supported through NRF R3.

The publication of the brochure would be timed to coincide with the proposed Regeneration Festival in March 2008.

Promotional items

The NRF Team use branded promotional items to help endorse the good work which is being supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. These items are not only used at publicity events by the NRF Team, but are also made available to project officers for events relating to their interventions. The NRF Sub-Group has agreed to fund a re-supply of stock.

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If you have any news that would appeal to an NRF audience, then please get in touch with Wendy Hodgson, Assistant NRF Manager on 0191 277 7855.