



# Give and Take Scheme Evaluation Report

2008 - 2010





---

This evaluation was carried out by LOCUS Management, a specialist regeneration consultancy based in Belfast. LOCUS has 14 years experience in respect to evaluation and research based assignments, with a particular focus on employability and skills, social inclusion and welfare reform. The evaluation was carried out by Maria Curran and Ciaran Boylan, both directors of LOCUS. [www.locusmgt.com](http://www.locusmgt.com)

---

# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....  | 6  |
| <b>1.0 Background and Introduction</b> .....  | 11 |
| 1.1 Include Youth.....  | 11 |
| 1.2 The Give and Take Scheme.....   | 12 |
| <b>2.0 Overview of the Give and Take Scheme</b> .....                                 | 14 |
| 2.1 The Referral Process.....   | 14 |
| Case Study 1.....   | 15 |
| Case Study 2.....   | 20 |
| 2.2 Profile of Young People Participating.....  | 23 |
| Case Study 3.....   | 24 |
| 2.3 The Induction Programme.....  | 26 |
| 2.4 Training.....   | 30 |
| 2.4.1 Essential Skills.....   | 30 |
| 2.4.2 Accredited Qualifications.....  | 31 |
| Case Study 4.....   | 33 |
| 2.5 Personal Development.....   | 35 |
| 2.6 Mentoring.....  | 36 |
| 2.7 Work Experience.....  | 38 |
| 2.8 Exit Strategy.....  | 43 |
| <b>3.0 Performance Assessment</b> .....   | 46 |
| 3.1 Recruitment.....  | 46 |
| 3.2 Retention.....  | 47 |
| 3.3 Employment.....   | 48 |
| 3.4 To provide 50 – 74% of participants with at least one qualification.....          | 48 |
| 3.5 70% of young people have a positive move on from the scheme.....                  | 48 |
| 3.6 50% of young people achieve an Essential Skills Qualification.....                | 49 |
| 3.7 80% of young people can demonstrate an increase in self esteem or confidence..... | 50 |
| Case Study 5.....   | 50 |

|            |   |           |
|------------|---|-----------|
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Strategic Impact</b> .....                           | <b>52</b> |
| 4.1        | Department for Employment & Learning (DEL) .....        | 53        |
| 4.1.1      | Careers Service .....                                   | 53        |
| 4.1.2      | Essential Skills Strategy .....                         | 54        |
| 4.1.3      | Training for Success .....                              | 54        |
| 4.1.4      | DEL Skills Strategy, 2010 (Consultative Document) ..... | 55        |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Conclusions</b> .....                                | <b>56</b> |
| 5.1        | Participation .....                                     | 57        |
| 5.2        | Completion .....  | 57        |
| 5.3        | Programme Management .....                              | 58        |
| 5.4        | Referral Process .....                                  | 59        |
| 5.5        | Training .....  | 60        |
| 5.6        | Personal Development .....                              | 60        |
| 5.7        | Mentoring .....   | 61        |
| 5.8        | Work Experience .....                                   | 61        |
| 5.9        | Exit Strategy .....                                     | 61        |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b> .....                            | <b>63</b> |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation of Include Youth's Give and Take Scheme was carried out by Locus Management in 2010. The evaluation reviewed the work of the Give and Take Scheme over the period April 2008 to August 2010. Include Youth is a not for profit organisation that actively promotes the rights, best interest of and best practice with young people in need or at risk. The Give and Take Scheme works predominantly (but not exclusively) with young people from a care background aged 16 to 21 who have been assessed as not ready to participate in mainstream training and employment opportunities. The aim of the scheme is to improve the long term employability of young people and to enhance their self esteem and self confidence. The Give and Take Scheme has developed since its origins in 1988; the programme was greatly enhanced through a successful ESF application in 2008 which provided additional funding to enhance the employer interface element of the programme and training provision. Finally, National Lottery funding was secured in 2009 to develop the mentoring component of Give and Take.

Young people are referred to the Give and Take Scheme by social workers from each of the five Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts. Social workers have a statutory obligation under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002 to provide greater support to young people living in and leaving care. The Give and Take Scheme is recognised as an exemplar programme by all five Trusts who refer young people to the programme. The Trusts currently contribute to the costs of 74 places annually as illustrated in Table 1.



**Table 1: Give and Take Participant Allocation by Health and Social Care Trust Area**

| Health and Social Care Trust | No of Places |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Belfast</b>               | 12           |
| <b>South Eastern</b>         | 12           |
| <b>Southern</b>              | 12           |
| <b>Northern</b>              | 18           |
| <b>Western</b>               | 20           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>74</b>    |

Give and Take works with a particularly marginalised group with many complex needs and issues. 100% of young people engaging are classified as 'NEET', i.e. not in education, employment or training and approximately three quarters are either in care or from a care background. Young people presenting to the Give and Take Scheme have had extremely negative experiences of schooling, home and family life which impacts upon their ability to engage with many of the mainstream programmes.

231<sup>1</sup> young people were recruited to the programme which is 143 short of the ESF target. There are, however, mitigating factors including that many young people stay on the programme for longer than the anticipated one year and 100% of places are occupied by Health and Social Care Trust referrals (which limits the numbers entering the programme).

All participants joining the Give and Take Scheme are provided with an induction programme tailored to meet individual needs. The vast majority of young people complete the induction phase, with programme monitoring records showing that to date there is a retention rate of 78.4%. Following induction participants are provided with access to a suite of six accredited training programmes. The successful ESF application provided Include Youth with the resources to employ their own Essential Skills tutors and expand the range and quality of training programmes on offer. Training provided is accredited which is important and young people on Give and Take place great value on attaining recognised qualifications. Qualifications awarded include:

- Essential Skills in Literacy and Numeracy (CCEA Entry 1 to Level 2)
- ICT (NIOCN Entry 3 to Level 2)
- Preparation for Placement (NIOCN Level1)
- Employment Skills (CCEA Levels 1 and 2)
- Getting Ahead (NIOCN Level1)
- Duke of Edinburgh

1 The figure of 231 is different from the figure given in Table 3 which shows 247 young people supported. This is due to differences in the reporting requirements and presentation of figures for ESF and each of the Trusts. Figures presented for ESF are for new young people recruited to the programme and for the Trusts information is presented for all young people supported within a given year.

- First Aid
- Driving Theory
- Driving Test
- Retail and Hospitality Skills
- CSR Card

Programme records highlight that the time young people on Give and Take engage in training has significantly increased from a total of 3,000 hours in Year 1 to 8,000 hours in Year 2. Records also indicate that 78% of all participants complete induction and successfully achieve at least one qualification and critically that 70% of all participants achieved their essential skills in numeracy and 67% achieved their essential skills in literacy (from approximately 12% achievement rates prior to directly employing essential skills tutors).

Personal Development support is provided through specific programmes (e.g. Getting Ahead / Health Matters) and one to one support delivered by the Personal Development/Mentoring Workers. This assists young people to manage their lives, make better decisions and to consider the impact of their actions. Programme monitoring records show that engagement by young people in personal development activities has increased from approximately 4,000 hours in Year 1 to 7,000 hours in Year 2. This equates to an average of 33 hours per person in Year 1 and 52 hours per person in Year 2. The evaluation identifies many positive outcomes in respect to personal development provision.

Funding secured through the National Lottery in 2009 provided Give and Take with the resources to introduce mentoring provision which is offered to all young people entering the scheme. All mentors are volunteers and receive extensive training upon being accepted as a mentor. To date 39 mentors have been recruited from across Northern Ireland. Currently only 21 of the recruited mentors are matched with a young person.

Finally, providing young people with the tools and necessary skills to gain employment is integral to the scheme's success. ESF funding helped secure the appointment of an Employability Coordinator with responsibility for enhancing and broadening the employer interface to help bridge the gap between those offering and seeking employment. Research carried out with the young people entering the scheme identified that young people had little knowledge of the types of jobs potentially they might like and therefore there was a need to introduce young people to job opportunities across a range of sectors. The Employability Coordinator therefore has worked with the Project Workers, introducing options that are focused upon the capability and readiness of each young person for work. These options include Work Prep, Work Ready and Work Well.

The employment of an Employability Coordinator has helped the Deputy Manager in his review of work experiences. The move away from extended work placement to a gradual Work Prep, Work Ready and then Work Placement has been much more suited to the needs of the young people. This process has benefited the young people in that;

- They are now more aware of career options
- They have developed their employability skills
- They have received a personality test through MAPS which has helped to identify what types of jobs they may be suited to
- They have visited different employers and engaged in a variety of work tasks
- They have employability related qualifications
- They have engaged in an extended work placement.

The evaluation identified Give and Take as an exemplar programme, providing a much needed and valued intervention for many young people in need. The aim of the programme is to enhance the employability and self confidence of young people at risk of social exclusion across Northern Ireland and there is much evidence to support that this has been achieved. Young people are more employable because of;

- The qualifications they have attained
- Their greater awareness of employability related skills which are needed in the workplace and the development of such skills
- Their improved behaviour and self awareness
- Their work experience
- Their feeling of self worth
- Their positive focus on the future.

The evaluation concluded with a number of recommendations including:

- The Give and Take model is one that works and should be sustained
- The Give and Take programme currently works with a small segment of the overall NEET group (130 per annum out of a total 10,140 NI total!!). Include Youth needs to consider if it is desirable as an organisation to support a greater number of young people through Give and Take and what impact this might have on the organisation
- The success of the model should be communicated widely to inform discussion and debate in respect to meeting the needs of NEET young people

- There is a need to enhance the sharing of information with those who currently refer and have the potential to refer young people to the scheme e.g. Trust staff (Gatekeepers, Social Workers, Employability Workers) and DEL Careers Advisers. Give and Take staff should have face to face meetings with such people once a year to discuss and review progress and share experiences
- In the current economic climate, where jobs are difficult to find and work placement opportunities are also becoming difficult, Give and Take may wish to consider the inclusion of a self employment, business skills training / practical input. This would introduce young people to more entrepreneurial focused skills development
- There needs to be a recognition that Give and Take is not an employment programme but an employability programme
- The evaluation identifies Give and Take as a model of best practice in respect to interventions with young people from a care background. There are a number of European transnational initiatives which potentially could provide a platform for Include Youth to promote Give and Take, to develop new practices and to learn from other similar organisations across the EU.



## 1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Include Youth

This evaluation report is an independent evaluation of the Include Youth Give and Take Scheme. Include Youth is a not for profit organisation that actively promotes the rights, best interests of and best practice with young people in need or at risk. The organisation was established in May 1979 as the NI Intermediate Treatment Association (NIITA) in anticipation of the publication of the Report of the Children and Young Persons Review group, the “Black Report”. NIITA changed its name to Include Youth in 1998. The Association (then and now) advocates for the introduction of policies and services for children and young people that keeps them within their communities.

The young people the organisation works with and for include those;

- from socially disadvantaged areas
- with special needs
- who have had poor educational experiences
- from a care background.

As well as young people who have committed or are at risk of;

- committing crime
- misusing drugs or alcohol
- undertaking unsafe sexual behaviour
- undertaking other harmful activities, or of being harmed themselves.

The values that underpin the work of the organisation are that all young people;

- have undisputed dignity and worth
- have the right to justice, care and protection
- have the potential to make positive choices for themselves and their lives
- have the right to be valued as active members of society.

Include Youth has a number of strategic aims, of which the following are of specific relevance to the Give and Take Scheme;

- a) To enable and encourage young people to actively participate in society and influence the issues and decisions that affect their lives
- b) To contribute to improving the health and well-being of young people
- c) To influence and create opportunities for young people to learn and achieve
- d) To enhance the employability skills and prospects of young people in need
- e) To work with all relevant stakeholders in a way that supports young people to achieve social and economic sustainability
- f) To challenge, influence and support young people and their families.

### 1.2 The Give and Take Scheme

The Give and Take Scheme works predominantly (but not exclusively) with young people from a care background aged 16 to 21 who have been assessed as not ready to participate in mainstream training and employment opportunities. The aims of the scheme are to improve the long term employability of young people and to enhance their self esteem and self confidence.

The project was developed in response to evidence and research findings that highlighted educational disadvantage and obstacles to educational attainment experienced by many children at risk of social exclusion. It was introduced by Include Youth in 1988 and was delivered on a very small scale initially. At the outset the project was only available to approximately 17 young people annually in Belfast, who were supported by one Project Manager and a Project Worker. However following successful pilots in 1997 the Give and Take Scheme was established in the Northern and Southern Health Board areas. In 1999 a Personal Development Worker was appointed to develop this aspect of the programme. The scheme became regional in 2003 when it began operating in the Western Health Board area. The receipt of ESF funding in 2008 enabled Include Youth to further enhance and develop the Give and Take Scheme through the recruitment of;

- 5 full time Personal Development/Mentoring Workers
- 1 full time Training Coordinator
- 4 part time Essential Skills Tutors
- 1 full time Employability Coordinator

The project now operates from bases in Belfast, Newtownards, Armagh, Omagh, Enniskillen, Derry, Coleraine and Ballymena and has contracts with all five Health Trusts. Prior to the Review of Public Administration the project worked in 8 out of 11 legacy Trusts and across the 4 Health Board areas.

In 2009 the Give and Take Scheme was successful in securing five years funding from the National Lottery's Safe and Well programme to develop a mentoring support input to the project. This funding was secured following a successful pilot mentoring project in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

This evaluation is focused upon the work of the Give and Take Scheme over the period April 2008 to August 2010. This equates to two of the three year funding period for which Include Youth received ESF funding from DEL to deliver the Give and Take Scheme. The evaluation has been informed by;

- i) Desk based analysis of project records and a sample of participant files
- ii) One to one consultation with Give and Take staff including;
  - Manager
  - Deputy Manager
  - Personal Development / Mentoring Coordinator
  - Training Coordinator
  - Employability Coordinator
- iii) Focus group consultations with Give and Take staff including;
  - Project Workers
  - Personal Development / Mentoring Workers
  - Employability Workers
  - Mentors
  - Essential Skills Tutors
- iv) Focus group consultations with young people currently engaged in the scheme (1 in each Trust area)
- v) One to one consultation with 5 young people currently engaged in the scheme (1 in each Trust area)
- vi) Consultations with a sample of Social Workers from each of the Trust areas
- vii) Consultations with the Gatekeepers in each Trust area
- viii) Consultations with key stakeholders including;
  - DEL TfS /Policy team
  - DEL Careers Service
- ix) Consultation with a sample of work placement providers across each of the Trust areas.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE GIVE AND TAKE SCHEME

### 2.1 The Referral Process

Young people are referred to the Give and Take Scheme by Social Workers from each of the Health and Social Care Trusts. Social Workers within the Trust have a statutory obligation under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002 to provide greater support to young people living in and leaving care. The responsible Trust must ensure that every eligible and relevant young person has a completed needs assessment at 16 years and 3 months. This needs assessment must include education, training and employment needs. By the time a young person is 16 years and 4 months they must have a written pathway plan which should address how to meet those needs. This pathway plan is reviewed every 6 months. The Give and Take Scheme is recognised by all of the Trusts as a suitable initiative that meets the education, training and employment needs of some young people within the care system. The Health and Social Care Trusts currently contribute to the cost of a total of 74 places annually for young people as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2: Give and Take Participant Allocation by Health and Social Care Trust Area**

| Health and Social Care Trust | No of Places |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Belfast                      | 12           |
| South Eastern                | 12           |
| Southern                     | 12           |
| Northern                     | 18           |
| Western                      | 20           |
| TOTAL                        | 74           |

The referral process is instigated primarily by the Social Worker in the Transition or 16+ teams within each Trust. However consultation with HSCT staff has indicated that referrals may also originate from long term residential units, Looked After Children (LAC) teams, Personal Advisers, Intensive Support Teams, Disability Teams and Family Support Teams. Within each Trust area there is a designated Gatekeeper whose role is to prioritise and approve the referrals being made to ensure that only those young people that most need support are awarded a place. Consultation would indicate that the role of the Gatekeeper varies between Trusts.

### Case Study 1

Paul is 18 years of age. When he was 12 he was removed from his mother’s care due to concerns about her ability to provide adequate parenting for him. Since then he has resided in many different placements including foster care and a residential home. He has a Statement of Educational Need and struggles with literacy and numeracy. Paul has a history of anti social behaviour and criminal involvement and has exhibited self harming behaviour. At the time of his referral he was also known to be involved in consuming large quantities of alcohol and was known to be smoking cannabis regularly. He was referred by his Social Worker as she believed that this would help;

- To enhance his self confidence and self esteem
- Secure opportunities for supported work placement as Paul was keen to get a job
- Reduce his risk of offending.

Paul was referred to Give and Take in June 2009. Give and Take staff advise that his literacy and numeracy skills were the lowest they had ever encountered and initially they were unsure if he would be able to cope on the programme. Paul was unable to read and write and he could not switch on a computer when he first arrived. Despite his low level of skills staff report that Paul is one of the best attenders on the programme and has achieved all of the qualifications, as well as his First Aid and CSR card. He no longer has to ask for help as he has made significant progress on his essential skills, albeit that they are still at a very low level. Because of this his Social Worker requested that he be offered an extension on the programme for a further 6 months to help further his essential skills.

During his consultation Paul advised that *"before Give and Take I was being a wee shit"*. He was very open about the fact that he was regularly *"thieving"* and engaging in anti social behaviour because he was *"bored"* and he never considered the consequences of his actions. He has really enjoyed Give and Take which he describes as *"great"* and the staff as *"dead on"*. He really enjoys the routine that Give and Take has introduced to him and as a result of having something to do he is no longer engaging in anti social behaviour. He remarks that Give and Take has *"changed"* him and kept him out of trouble. He has confidence now in his ability to achieve and realises that anything is possible but that he will have to work for what he wants. The staff on Give and Take have pushed him to achieve and while initially he would have had the attitude *"I can't do that"*, now he reports that he knows that he can do it. He believes that as a result of Give and Take he now has a better chance of getting a job because he has;

- Qualifications
- Improved English and Maths
- A cv
- Work experience.

Paul has also really enjoyed the social activities with Give and Take and the opportunities he has had would not have been available to him if he was not on the programme. He has enjoyed meeting new people and new friends. Paul is now more positive about his future and he recognises that he needs and wants routine when he leaves Give and Take to ensure that he doesn't fall back into his old ways. He hopes to get a job and is currently working towards securing a work placement.

- a) In Belfast all referrals are made to the Gatekeeper who meets quarterly with the Give and Take Project Worker and Personal Development/Mentoring Worker to review referrals and prioritise which young people should be offered a place. This meeting also provides an opportunity to review how well those young people currently on the scheme are engaging. The young people that are referred to the scheme are those who;
- Cannot manage mainstream education
  - Have missed a lot of school and are no longer of school age i.e. they are 16 + and therefore no longer the responsibility of Belfast Education and Library Board
  - Have no qualifications
  - Exhibit high risk behaviour
  - Have complex needs
  - Are hard to engage and motivate
  - Are not typically "joiners" or "stayers" of programmes.
- b) In the Southern Health and Social Care Trust the Gatekeeper also plays a hands on role and meets either monthly or bimonthly with the Give and Take Project Worker to review and prioritise referrals. Consultation with the Gatekeeper and Social Workers has indicated that priority is given to those young people who;



- Are from a care background (not all referrals are for young people in care)
- Have not engaged well in formal education
- Have no qualifications
- Need essential skills support
- Can't deal with mainstream education.

The Gatekeeper also advised that all Health and Social Care Trusts have a PSA target to achieve which states that "By March 2010 Trusts will be required to increase by 70% the population of care leavers in education, training and employment at age 19."<sup>2</sup> The SHSCT has not been successful in the attainment of this target and thus the Gatekeeper has advised that in allocating places on the Give and Take Scheme they have started to prioritise 19 year olds to assist in the attainment of this target.

- c) In the Western Health and Social Care Trust there are two Gatekeepers, one covering the Omagh and Enniskillen area and one the Derry area. Consultation with the WHSCT Gatekeeper in Omagh has indicated that previously referrals to the Give and Take Scheme were via the Social Worker, direct to Give and Take staff. This procedure has been amended very recently and referral to Give and Take will be considered as part of the DEL careers assessment process

2 Promoting Positive outcomes in Education, Training or Employment for Young People Leaving Care, DEL, DHSSPS, February 2010



which is conducted as part of the pathway process. Priority is given to those young people who have dropped out of mainstream education or training and are not able to manage a mainstream education or training programme / environment. In Omagh the Social Worker advised that priority is given to young people under 18 years of age.

The Gatekeeper in Derry has advised that the DEL careers assessment process is also an important referral mechanism as part of the young person's pathway planning process. Priority is given to those young people aged 19, in keeping with the Trust's PSA target for 19 year olds. Also Trust staff report that Give and Take is targeted at those young people with poor educational attainment and also those with poor social and emotional skills who require the supportive environment available with Give and Take and who would not cope well in a traditional educational or training environment.

- d) In the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Gatekeeping meetings are scheduled with Trust staff and the Give and Take Project Worker to discuss and prioritise referrals from each of the 16+ teams in Magherafelt, Coleraine and Antrim. Priority is given to those young people who;
- Have dropped out of education and as a result have no qualifications
  - Lack confidence to engage in mainstream education and training
  - Are at risk of losing their residential placement because they are not in education or training.
- e) In the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust the Gatekeeper is the recently appointed Employment Support Manager who has been recruited from outside the Trust. At the time of the evaluation consultation process the Gatekeeper was relatively new in post and consultation with the Gatekeeper and with Social Workers indicated that, comparative to other Health Trust areas, the role of the Gatekeeper differed in that it was advised that referral forms go straight from the Social Workers to Give and Take staff. Consultation with SEHSCT Social Workers has indicated that young people referred to Give and Take are those for whom formal education or alternative education has not worked.

Many of the Trusts consulted reported that they see the Give and Take Scheme as an integral part of a "stepping stone" process for young people. It is considered to be a pre vocational scheme which will help to prepare young people for a more mainstream education and training environment where they will be able to further their education and training, thus enhancing their employment prospects in the longer term. It is evident from consultations that there are limited pre vocational options available for young people in each Trust area. Other educational and employability programmes that were referenced by Trust staff included;

- The Prince's Trust
- Springboard
- Further Education Colleges
- Local training providers

- EOTAS (Education Other Than At School)
- Opportunity Youth
- VOYPIC
- Business in the Community.

All Trust staff were unanimous in their feedback that Give and Take differentiates itself from all other programmes in respect to the totality of the Give and Take package, namely;

- The programme is 12 months duration for each young person and has the option of a possible extension if needed
- The programme is focused upon the individual needs of each young person
- The programme is flexible in its style and pace of delivery ensuring that all young people stay engaged
- The staff have an excellent understanding and empathy with the young people
- Young people are well supported by a dynamic team of staff and volunteers
- The programme is delivered in an informal community based setting and not in a formal academic setting
- There is a good working relationship between Give and Take staff and Trust staff.

The Give and Take programme is therefore the preferred option of Trust staff for some of the harder to engage young people in their care. It would appear that the referral process to Give and Take is working well as evidenced by the numbers of young people that are coming onto the scheme annually. Give and Take project records show that over the last two years the total number of new starts onto the programme exceeds the target number of places being supported by the Health Trusts.

**Table 3: Give and Take Participant Numbers**

| Health and Social Care Trust | Target No of Participants Yr 1 | Actual No of Participants Yr 1 | Target No of Participants Yr 2 | Actual No of Participants Yr 2 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Belfast</b>               | 12                             | 21                             | 12                             | 27                             |
| <b>South Eastern</b>         | 12                             | 24                             | 12                             | 24                             |
| <b>Southern</b>              | 12                             | 24                             | 12                             | 24                             |
| <b>Northern</b>              | 12                             | 20                             | 18                             | 29                             |
| <b>Western</b>               | 12                             | 25                             | 20                             | 29                             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 60                             | 114                            | 74                             | 133                            |

As of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 an additional 23 young people had joined the scheme for engagement in Year 3 of the Give and Take programme bringing the total number of young people on the scheme to 93.



## Case Study 2

Sarah is 17 and has a care history since she was 11 years of age, due to alcohol misuse and domestic violence at home. She dropped out of school despite being academically very able and is described as a 'rebellious' young girl who finds it difficult to comply with boundaries at home. Sarah is hard to engage and Give and Take staff report that they have found working with Sarah to be extremely challenging as she would not communicate with them for many months. Initially all contact was through Sarah's mother who accompanied her to all induction sessions. This proved to be very difficult for staff who were unsure initially of the benefit that Sarah would get from the programme if she would not communicate with staff. The induction process was *"difficult and almost impossible"* according to staff and Sarah indicated that she was only interested in training towards qualifications and was not interested in any of the personal development activities. Sarah started Give and Take in December 2009 and it took until April 2010 for her to complete her induction. Her time keeping was very poor and in May 2010 Give and Take staff met with Sarah to discuss her commitment and level of interest in the programme. Staff queried Sarah's motivation and following a frank and honest session Sarah advised that she was interested in participating.

Sarah was particularly keen to get a job and it was agreed that the Project Worker would organise childcare work experience for her over the summer. The Project Worker sourced a local childcare business and met with the employer at the end of July to discuss the possibility of Sarah going

on work experience. A taster day was arranged initially when Sarah and the Project Worker visited the childcare business and since August Sarah has been attending for work experience two days a week. This placement has had an extremely positive impact on Sarah. Give and Take staff report that feedback from the employer is very positive and they have agreed to offer her additional work experience if she decides to go to college to get her childcare qualifications. This is an exit strategy that staff are working towards with Sarah.

Sarah's time with the Give and Take programme will be coming to an end soon and staff, her Social Worker and her mother all report that she is a very different person compared to when she first came to the programme. For example, they report that Sarah;

- Is much more communicative. Her Social Worker remarks how she is more talkative and will now make eye contact when she is talking
- Has developed enhanced self esteem and confidence, which is particularly evident in the workplace where she is obviously at ease and enjoying herself
- Is a much happier young girl – her mother commented that before Give and Take Sarah was *"unhappy"* and *"didn't know what to do with her life"*
- Is physically more self confident in her stance and appearance
- Is more relaxed in a group setting
- Has a sense of purpose and is focused upon her future, a career and the qualifications that she will need to achieve her goal
- Is a better timekeeper and gets out of bed to be in work for 8.30am. Her mother reports that *"she wouldn't have bothered getting out of bed before"*
- Is much more relaxed at home where her mother advises there is a *"nicer atmosphere"*.

Both Sarah's Social Worker and her mother have praised staff at the Give and Take Scheme for *"not giving up on her"*. They are appreciative for the respect and patience that they have shown her despite the fact that for many months she would not communicate or properly engage with them. Her mother comments that *"where others would have given up Give and Take didn't"*. Both agree that if Sarah had not been involved with Give and Take she would now be sitting at home doing nothing. Instead she is now working two days a week, developing her essential skills qualifications and considering going to college to study for a childcare qualification. Her Social Worker also advises that the Give and Take Scheme has preserved Sarah's placement at home. If she had continued to do nothing and to stay at home, her Social Worker would have had no option but to consider placing her in residential care.

When staff from each of the Trusts were asked if their allocation of places was sufficient to meet the needs in their area the SEHSCT and WHSCT felt that their allocation was sufficient. The BHSCT, NHSCT and SHSCT felt that they could refer more people if there were additional places and funding available. Currently young people who are referred from a Trust area that has a full quota of places filled must wait until a place becomes available i.e. someone leaves the programme. In some areas therefore a waiting list is operational although Trust



staff advise that where a waiting list exists, young people do not generally have to wait very long (2 months) until they are offered a place.

Consultations would indicate that some Trusts see the Give and Take Scheme as a last resort for young people with complex needs who have not been able to sustain any form of education or training provision. Others do not believe that Give and Take is appropriate for young people with a complexity of issues and needs and should be targeted at those young people who can make best use of the scheme as they are ready and able to engage, albeit that they still require the support to do so.

Gatekeepers advise however that Give and Take is what is needed by those young people exhibiting the above characteristics and that they are referred in the hope that the stability and direction of Give and Take may help them to overcome their problems and begin to motivate them. Such young people are a challenge for Give and Take staff and it is estimated that there is a higher risk of this group of young people not sustaining engagement with the programme. However as presented in the case studies included in this report, there has been significant achievement with some of the most difficult and challenging young people. Staff report that the scheme should always be available for those young people at highest risk but it is important to ensure a balance of young people in any one group.

It is evident that the success of the referral process is dependent on a partnership approach between Give and Take and each of the Trusts. Give and Take staff report that in some areas it works very well, where there is a close working relationship at the referral stage and where Trust staff understand what the programme offers and who it would best fit. Consultations with Social Workers would concur with this and by their own admission Social Workers believe that they could and should be better informed about the detail of the Give and Take Scheme.

All young people referred to the Give and Take Scheme have the option of agreeing or not to participate. The programme is voluntary and there is no obligation on any young person to participate if they do not wish to do so. This is considered to be extremely important to ensure buy in from the young people. All young people referred have an opportunity to meet with Give and Take staff along with their Social Worker to learn more about the scheme and are then given time to make a decision about participating. Consultation with young people who are currently participating has indicated that the reason they agreed to participate included the fact that they liked;

- the staff they met
- what the programme had to offer
- the fact that they were able to get one to one support
- the possibility of getting qualifications that would help them to get a job
- feeling welcome
- feeling no pressure
- *"it wasn't like school or tech"*.

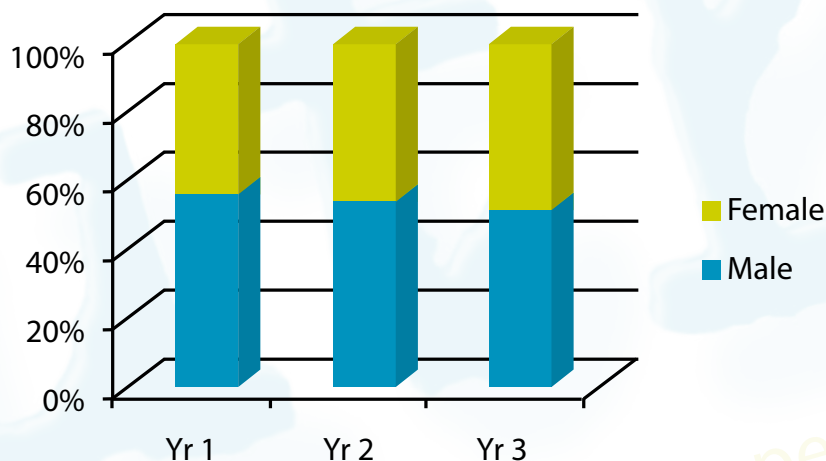
## 2.2 Profile of Young People Participating

Give and Take programme records show that the young people engaged with the scheme are a particularly vulnerable group with many complex needs and issues. 100% of young people engaging are classified as “NEET” i.e. not in education, employment or training and approximately three quarters are either in care or from a care background. Participant records for the three years of the programme to date show that;

- 70% of young people have essential skills difficulties
- 60% are from a socially and economically deprived background
- 52% are in unsettled accommodation
- 46% have experienced abuse and / or neglect
- 44% have experienced mental / emotional health problems
- 39% engage in alcohol and substance misuse
- 34% have an offending background
- 24% left school early
- 16% have a learning / physical disability
- 5% are young parents

To date there have been slightly more males than females on the programme but the ratio has been decreasing and currently the makeup of the Year 3 group is 52% male and 48% female.

**Fig. 1: Participation by Gender**



Young people presenting to the Give and Take Scheme have had extremely negative experiences of schooling, home and family life which has adversely impacted upon their ability to engage with any other mainstream programme. This presents challenges for Give and Take but consultation with Health Trust staff has highlighted that staff within the Give and Take Scheme are excellent in their approach to working with such a complex group.

They have empathy and understanding and their manner and demeanour is relaxed and informal, which works well. When complications arise in the lives of the young people, that impact upon their ability to engage, staff within Give and Take will support and assist each young person to cope with what is going on around them. Thus it has to be acknowledged that within the Give and Take model there will be times when progress will be slow. However by maintaining relationships with the young people staff ensure that they stay engaged and feel able to come back to the programme when they are ready. This flexibility in programme delivery and the person centred approach is critical to the success of the programme.



### Case Study 3

Mark is 19 years of age and was referred to Social Services when he was 12 due to concerns about parental control at home. Prior to coming into care he was subjected to significant trauma, loss, rejection and multiple moves and his experiences included;

- The death of his father when he was 5 years old
- Witness to serious physical violence (domestic and other)
- Multiple house and school moves
- Multiple placements – he has been in 20 different placements between 2002 and 2009, including time spent in the Juvenile Justice Centre and Hydebank Young Offenders Centre

- Difficult and volatile relationship with his step father
- His mother and siblings leaving NI.

Mark has a significant criminal profile. His first conviction was when he was 12 years of age and he has a total of 92 convictions. His Social Worker referral to the Give and Take Scheme reports that Mark was not suitable for mainstream education due to his poor literacy and numeracy issues, resulting from his interrupted education. The referral makes reference to the unresolved feelings and emotions Mark was trying to cope with and the fact that he *“deals with these issues through self harm, drug misuse, anger and other high risk behaviours”*. Also *“he can present as lazy and not very motivated but this is a confidence issue”*. Mark is described as;

- Hurt
- Confused
- Angry
- Fearful
- Hopeless
- Rejected
- Abandoned.

Mark agreed to come onto Give and Take because he would be able to avail of one to one support. He did not want to join any training programme that required group settings because he was concerned that he would not be able to keep up. This was based upon his school experiences where he was left behind in class. Give and Take staff agreed to work with Mark on a one to one basis and they report that he flew through his induction in seven weeks. They report that Mark's ability is high *“but he had no confidence to engage”* in group based training. Following induction and his attainment of some qualifications Mark began to grow in confidence and started to ask about opportunities to engage in other Give and Take activities. Mark progressed to group based work and participated fully, developing a more positive attitude to engagement. Staff report that previously Mark would have said no to everything but now he *“will give anything a go”*.

When consulted Mark describes the group work as *“brilliant”* which he admits himself he didn't want to get involved with at the start. He reports that he *“loves”* the Give and Take programme and the classes which are *“not like the tech”*. He reported that *“I've done more here than any other techs. I didn't go to class as I couldn't concentrate in large groups”*. Mark is very aware of the need to change his lifestyle. *“This is my last chance to give it a go. I'm sick of committing crime and I want to change my life around. They will help me”*. He admits that prior to Give and Take he was drinking and taking drugs every day. Now he has something to preoccupy him every day, keeping him busy and out of trouble.

Mark's Social Worker believes that Give and Take has been *“the making of him”*. The ability of Give and Take staff to successfully work with a high risk individual such as Mark has been praised by the Social Worker and the package of support on offer has been of huge benefit to him. He has moved from one to one training to group training, he has gained qualifications and he has

benefitted from a work placement in Homebase. They describe the very positive impact that the programme has had in that;

- Prior to Give and Take Mark had an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and didn't care what happened to him. Now he realises that as he has worked so hard and put so much into the scheme that he can't go back
- Mark now has hope and a belief both in himself and for himself
- He has a positive attitude to life and his future
- He has developed a sense of independence which has been enhanced through his work placement opportunity
- His communication skills have improved – he used to swear a lot and talk about crime whereas now he talks more about his future in a positive way
- His resilience has improved and he is now better able to deal with issues in his life.

Mark specifically makes reference during his consultation to his mentor who he describes as "*brilliant*" and someone he can really trust. He can talk to his mentor about anything that is happening in his life and the Social Worker also remarks about the importance of Mark's mentor who they have also interacted with in respect to addressing issues being experienced by Mark.

Mark wants to get a job and he values the qualifications that he has been able to get at Give and Take. His time on the programme is due to come to an end but he would like to stay longer and get more qualifications. Mark believes that if he was not on Give and Take he would be in jail or dead as a result of his misuse of alcohol and drugs. He remarks "*I've changed so much*". He has not engaged in criminal activity during his time with Give and Take and has reduced his alcohol intake significantly during the week. He knows that he has opportunities available to him if he applies himself.

### 2.3 The Induction Programme

Once a young person has agreed to come onto the Give and Take Scheme they complete an induction programme on a one to one level in conjunction with a Project Worker and a Personal Development/Mentoring Worker. This is a structured programme which is delivered over six sessions and includes;

1. Introduction to Volunteering – all young people coming onto the programme are volunteers and therefore the first session advises the young person of what is expected of them and discusses their experiences, skills, likes, dislikes etc. This session enables the Project Worker to develop a good understanding of the young person, what they would like to achieve from their participation on the scheme and how Give and Take will be able to assist them.
2. Why Volunteer – this session explores what it means to be a volunteer and informs the young person of policies and procedures that Include Youth adhere to e.g. Confidentiality and Child Protection. A client referral to DEL Careers Adviser is also completed and sent to the Careers Adviser.

3. Personal Development Assessment – session 3 introduces the Personal Development/Mentoring Worker to the young person and discusses the personal development activities that they will be able to engage in. A personal development assessment form is completed to determine what activities the young person is interested in. During this session the Personal Development/Mentoring Worker will complete a Rickter assessment with the young person. The Rickter Scale® is an assessment and action planning process based around a hand-held interactive board, which is designed specifically to measure soft indicators and distance travelled. The aims of Rickter are to assist individuals to better understand their present circumstances and to identify priority areas for support or intervention. The Personal Development/Mentoring Worker engages in discussion with the young person using a Life board which focuses upon;

- Employment, education and training
- Accommodation
- Money
- Relationships
- Influences
- Stress
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Health
- Happiness.

Consultation with staff has highlighted that the use of Rickter provides a framework for discussion with the young people that allows them to open up about their current circumstances and their hopes for the future. Personal Development / Mentoring Workers report that using Rickter can bring up discussions that would perhaps not have emerged outside of the personal development assessment. This discussion gives a further insight into the young person and their personal circumstances and expectations and provides a good baseline from which staff can work with them over the duration of the scheme.

Rickter can also be used as an evaluation tool to measure the distance travelled by young people at the end of the Give and Take programme. This necessitates completing Rickter again once the young person is coming to an end of their time with the programme. Consultation with Personal Development / Mentoring Workers has indicated that this is not being applied consistently by all workers with all participants. It is our assessment that while Rickter is valued as an assessment and planning tool its worth as an evaluation tool is not completely understood by staff and when asked to provide a report on the distance travelled for those for whom Rickter had been completed before and after, staff were unsure how this information could be gathered.

During session three there is also a health assessment questionnaire that has been

designed for completion. Personal Development / Mentoring Workers have reported that they find the use of this questionnaire too invasive with respect to some of the questions asked. This is the first time that the Personal Development / Mentoring Worker has met the young person and it is considered that the questions asked are not appropriate for this first meeting. The use of this questionnaire therefore varies and Personal Development/Mentoring Workers report that there is a need to review the use of this questionnaire.



Finally, all young people will undertake an Essential Skills assessment in order to ensure that the training and support provided are 'pitched' at the appropriate level and that targets set are challenging yet realistic for each person. The Essential Skills assessment will be reviewed throughout the stay of the young person on the programme and reassessed if required and remedial steps taken.

4. Meeting the Careers Adviser – session 4 involves the young person meeting with a DEL Careers Adviser to discuss what the young person's aspirations are in respect to future employment and what action is needed to help them realise their ambitions. Formally integrating DEL Careers Advisers into Give and Take is important because once the young people leave Give and Take they will still have access to support from their Careers Adviser. It is important that they understand and recognise their role in assisting them to find a job.
5. Getting Ready to Start – session 5 is focused upon discussion with the young person about behaviour and expectations when in a work environment. This is to prepare them for potential work placement opportunities and gives the Project Worker an indication of their understanding and readiness for a work environment. More recently staff have introduced a MAPS assessment which is a personality test with young people that can

assist them to identify potential areas of work that they may be suited to. This is an assessment tool which is also used by DEL Careers Advisers.

6. Individual Action Plan – the final induction session brings together the young person with both the Project Worker and Personal Development/Mentoring Worker to agree a weekly timetable of activity. At this session an assessment is made by staff of the personal development needs of the young person and the programmes that they will engage in to address these needs. An assessment is also made of the attributes of the young person in respect to their;

- Motivation / Attitude
- Timekeeping / Reliability
- Independence
- Communication / Social skills
- Skills / Experience
- Confidence / Self belief
- Resilience / Stickability
- Support factors
- Factors affecting health and wellbeing.

This is a useful baseline assessment of the employability related skills of participants. The exercise provides an indication of specific areas that need work to enhance the young person's employability. The work readiness of the young person is also discussed



in respect to whether they are ready to engage in a placement and if not the level of work preparation that is needed to get them to a stage when they will be able to embark on a placement.

Delivery of the induction programme is scheduled to suit the needs of each individual young person, with some completing the programme relatively quickly and others, who have more complex personal circumstances and issues in their lives taking longer. Consultation with Health Trust staff and the young people engaged on the programme has consistently highlighted that this flexibility of delivery is extremely important. One to one work with each young person at the outset helps to develop relationships with staff and helps to keep the young person motivated to return.

Programme monitoring records show that to date 50 young people have dropped out of the programme before completing induction which equates to 21.6% of young people coming onto the programme. Give and Take staff use this figure when referring to the drop out rate for the programme. When figures are assessed annually they show that the proportion of young people sustaining engagement in induction (i.e. completed or progressing) is improving annually, with 80% in Year 1, 86% in Year 2 and to date in Year 3, 95%.

## 2.4 Training

The receipt of ESF funding by Include Youth in 2008 enabled the organisation to introduce an enhanced focus upon training and qualifications to the Give and Take Scheme. This has been achieved through the creation of new training posts within the organisation and the recruitment of;

- 0.5 of a full time Training Coordinator
- 4 Essential Skills Tutors

Prior to 2008 there were two issues in respect to training that were considered to be a weakness within the scheme. One was in relation to essential skills provision and the other concerned a lack of formalised accredited qualifications.

### 2.4.1 Essential Skills

Traditionally essential skills training was accessed via the further education colleges who had a very inflexible approach to training delivery and thus were unable to accommodate the needs of the target group of young people, for whom traditional training to date has not been possible. For example, training had to be in a group setting and failure to turn up to three classes resulted in expulsion from that class. This is a system that does not work for the young people targeted by Give and Take and as a result young people were not succeeding in getting their essential skills qualifications while on the Give and Take Scheme. In 2009 Essential Skills Tutors were employed by Give and Take to deliver in house training across the Give and Take venues. Table 4 shows the impact of this move in that as a result of bringing essential skills training in house, the success of young people in attaining their essential skills qualifications has grown year on year.

**Table 4: Essential Skills Qualifications Attained**

| Skill           | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11<br>(first qtr) |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------|
| <b>Literacy</b> | 9       | 19      | 47      | 11                     |
| <b>Numeracy</b> | 3       | 17      | 63      | 13                     |
| <b>ICT</b>      | 2       | 14      | 28      | -                      |

This has been a significant achievement for the Give and Take Scheme. Essential skills are a major issue for the target group of young people, with 70% experiencing difficulties. Consultation with young people has shown that they value the supportive and encouraging approach adopted by the tutors and the fact that work is pitched at a level at which they can achieve. One to one support has been identified as an important option for some young people. For some there is a need for one to one support from the outset as they have a lack of confidence in participating in a group setting, for others their level of ability is so weak that they require additional support over and above the class provision. While for some, group settings can be distracting and they are more productive on a one to one basis.

#### **2.4.2 Accredited Qualifications**

Prior to 2008 training provided on the Give and Take programme was not accredited. Include Youth and the Give and Take staff have become aware of the need for an outcomes based approach to programme delivery. Through the recruitment of the Training Coordinator the organisation has now developed a much more formalised training programme. The Training Coordinator has ensured that all training delivered is now accredited, with participants having the opportunity to achieve an additional 3 qualifications (not including Essential Skills). These qualifications include;

- Preparation for Placement (OCN Level 1)
- Employment Skills (CCEA Level 1 and OCN Level 3)
- Getting Ahead Personal Development Programme (OCN Level 1).

All accredited training is focused upon enhancing the employability of the young people. Additional training courses have been introduced to the scheme to enhance and complement the employability skills training. This has included courses in;

- First Aid
- CSR Card
- Driving Theory and Driving Test
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Hospitality and Retail Training.

An important aspect of Give and Take is the fact that young people can attain a qualification early in the programme (within the first 10 to 12 weeks). This is attainable through the award



of the Preparation for Placement qualification which is attained following completion of induction. This gives the young person a sense of achievement which for many, coming from a failed schooling background, is extremely important. This sense of achievement manifests itself in enhanced confidence and self esteem within the young person and facilitates their retention and engagement beyond the induction period. For most young people this is the first qualification and certificate that they have ever received. One young person’s comment is indicative of the experiences of those young people consulted;

*“There is more to do, it gets us out of the classroom, so relaxed and laid back, yet you cover so many things. I already have two qualifications and I have only been on the programme four months”*

The introduction of a more formalised approach to training has presented a challenge to Include Youth and the Give and Take staff. It has introduced a new way of working which has required a cultural change within the organisation and has necessitated moving towards more formality in training while still trying to retain a non academic approach to delivery. This has been a challenge but qualification results and feedback from the young people would infer that Give and Take staff have got the balance right. Young people describe Give and Take as “a good laugh” and “good craic” where staff “make the work good”. They describe the atmosphere as “laid back” and “relaxed” but somewhere where “you can get the work done”. Results show that the approach to training is working as demonstrated in Table 5.

**Table 5: Qualifications Awarded, April 2008 – June 2010**

| Qualification                                   | No of Qualifications Awarded |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Preparation for Placement</b>                | 110                          |
| <b>Employment Skills</b>                        | 14                           |
| <b>Getting Ahead</b>                            | 45                           |
| <b>Duke of Edinburgh Section Award (bronze)</b> | 104                          |
| <b>Duke of Edinburgh Section Award (silver)</b> | 8                            |
| <b>First Aid</b>                                | 34                           |
| <b>Driving theory</b>                           | 10                           |
| <b>Hospitality and Retail</b>                   | 26                           |
| <b>CSR Card</b>                                 | 12                           |

Programme monitoring records show that the time young people are engaged in training under the Give and Take Scheme has significantly increased from a total of approximately 3,000 hours in Year 1 to 8,000 hours in Year 2. This equates to an average of 26 hours per person in Year 1 and 59 hours per person in Year 2, which is more than double the training hours that young people are now engaging in. Consultation with the Training Coordinator has confirmed that previously there was a fairly laid back approach to training, with young people being allowed to opt out if they wanted. This approach has changed and now staff stress the importance of the training for the young people if they want to enhance their employability. It is therefore no longer an option to opt out of training but rather young people are supported and encouraged to complete all training available.

#### **Case Study 4**

Peter is 18 and was referred to Social Services when he was 8 due to concerns about his mother's ability to care for her son due to mental health issues. He was placed in a children's home in 2009 as a temporary arrangement due to concerns about his personal safety and vulnerability. His Social Worker's referral makes reference to the fact that Peter has threatened suicide on a number of occasions. Peter has a mild learning disability and finds formal learning difficult. He has literacy and numeracy problems and while he has started several training courses with training agencies in the past, he has been unable to sustain any of these courses. Peter was referred to Give and Take as it was considered that the Give and Take flexible approach to training and the small group and one to one training options would suit his needs. Consultation with Peter confirmed that while he has engaged in both group and one to one sessions he prefers the one to one because it's "*quieter*" and he can "*get through the work quicker*".

Give and Take staff report that when Peter first started he was quiet and hard to engage. Now he will talk openly to staff when things are bothering him and he is open to support from staff. During his consultation Peter confirmed that it has taken him a while to trust staff but that he now feels comfortable in talking to them.

Peter's attendance on the programme has been excellent and he has achieved all of the qualifications available. Despite his essential skills difficulties he has excelled at his literacy and numeracy and Peter's sense of achievement has increased his self confidence and given him a sense of hope for the future. A Social Work review report states; Peter "*continues to present with improved self esteem and confidence*" and "*Give and Take has been central in providing him security and stability.*"

Peter reports that he enjoys Give and Take. He has enjoyed the flexibility of the programme and now that he has achieved his qualifications he would like to do more training. He has really enjoyed the social activities of Give and Take and feels much more confident in engaging with others. He has even felt comfortable participating in Give and Take activities outside his own area. When asked if the Give and Take programme has changed him in any way, Peter reports that as a result of meeting new people and making new friends he has become less sectarian and more tolerant. He reports that in advance of Give and Take he often engaged in anti social sectarian activity. He had never interacted with anyone from a different religion and through Give and Take he has been introduced to other young people from a different religious background. As a result of getting to know these young people he has made new friends and as a group sectarianism has been discussed. He now realises that his behaviour was wrong.

Peter was provided a work placement opportunity but unfortunately this did not work out for him. He is unsure what he would like to work at and staff report that he lacked self confidence to sustain his placement. Peter has been on the programme for over one year and it is time for him to move on. He has concerns about leaving but he has been reassured that he can call into the office at any time. He has applied to the further education college for training.

When Give and Take staff were asked how Peter has benefitted from the programme they comment that he has;

- Improved his essential skills
- Become more self confident
- Developed his social skills
- Improved his communication skills
- Reduced his self harming behaviour.

If he was not on the programme Peter reports that he would be *“sitting at home watching tv”*.



## 2.5 Personal Development

The Give and Take Scheme employs five Personal Development/Mentoring Workers, who are managed by a Co-ordinator. The role of the Personal Development/Mentoring Workers is essentially split into two key areas of work;

- Providing personal development, training and support for participants
- Recruiting and managing mentors to provide additional support to participants.

Consultation with Personal Development / Mentoring Workers suggests that approximately 90% of their time is spent on providing personal development support within the Give and Take programme and approximately 10% is spent on their management of mentoring.

Personal Development / Mentoring Workers work closely with Project Workers in the delivery of the Give and Take Scheme in each region. The Personal Development input has been highlighted by Social Workers as an extremely important aspect of Give and Take because all young people presenting to the programme have considerable self confidence and self esteem issues and require support to enhance their social skills. The personal development input is considered essential to ensure that young people sustain their engagement with the programme and participate effectively in all areas.

Personal development programmes and activities are planned in conjunction with input from the young people in each region. Every six to eight weeks the Personal Development / Mentoring Worker will review with the young people the previous work plan that has been completed and plan for the next block of activities, encouraging the young people to put forward their own ideas. To date the programmes delivered include;

- Health Matters
- Getting Ahead
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Arts and Crafts
- Social activities

The Getting Ahead programme is a 12 week personal development programme delivered entirely through group work which young people really enjoy. At the focus groups they report that it's *"not taught at, it is fun and good craic"*. The programme is one that has been delivered as part of the Give and Take Scheme for many years but has recently been revised and is now more structured. It focuses on the issues which young people face and on completion each young person receives an OCN Level 1 certificate. Personal Development/Mentoring Workers report that there are still opportunities to improve the Getting Ahead programme and to concentrate on a smaller number of topic areas over a longer period. They also believe that there are opportunities to introduce more accredited programmes within the personal development programme overall and ones which can be delivered in house by Give and Take staff.

Over the summer months Give and Take staff organise a summer programme of activities to ensure that the young people stay engaged with the scheme. Essential skills training ceases over the summer to give the young people a break from the more academic side of the programme but for approximately 6 to 8 weeks an activity focused programme is run in each area. This is well attended and is important for sustaining the engagement of the young people. On the negative side it breaks momentum which is difficult to recapture and staff have proposed classes should continue over the summer along with the other activities.

Programme monitoring records show that engagement by young people in personal development activities has increased from approximately 4,000 hours in Year 1 to 7,000 hours in Year 2. This equates to an average of 33 hours per person in Year 1 and 52 hours per person in Year 2.

## 2.6 Mentoring

Mentoring is a relatively new addition to the Give and Take Scheme following their successful application to the Big Lottery's Safe and Well programme. Funding was approved in June 2009 and since then staff have been actively recruiting, training and matching mentors to appropriate young people. All mentors are voluntary and eligibility criteria for selection are that they must be over 21 years of age and interested in working with young people. There is no requirement that mentors must have any formal youth work qualifications. An innovative practice of Give and Take staff is that they involve the young people in the recruitment process for mentors. Young people have an opportunity to sit in on a presentation by applicants and staff actively seek their feedback following these presentations.

Give and Take staff provide a 60 hour training session for all mentors recruited which is an accredited course, OCN Level II Mentoring Young People at Risk. Annually Give and Take plan to host a mentor's residential, the first of which was in January 2010. This provided an opportunity to deliver further training to mentors and to discuss and address any issues and needs.

To date 39 mentors have been recruited across Northern Ireland as shown in Table 6. There is still work to be done however to recruit and train additional mentors to fulfil the need for one mentor per participant in each Trust area. Once mentors are recruited the matching process is also important to ensure that mentors and the young people are appropriately matched. Currently only 21 of the recruited mentors are matched with a young person.

**Table 6: Give and Take Mentors**

| Area                 | No of Mentors | No of Mentors Matched |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Belfast</b>       | 12            | 7                     |
| <b>South Eastern</b> | 5             | 4                     |
| <b>Southern</b>      | 4             | 0                     |
| <b>Northern</b>      | 13            | 10                    |
| <b>Western</b>       | 5             | 0                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | 39            | 21                    |

Mentoring responsibilities are proving to be a challenge for staff as it is a relatively new area of work and there have been some initial difficulties in attracting and retaining mentors. As Table 6 shows some areas have been more successful than others in recruiting mentors and it is recognised that there is a need to recruit more male mentors.

A focus group was held with mentors from across Northern Ireland. All of the mentors reported that they enjoy mentoring on the Give and Take programme. They enjoyed and valued the training provided by Give and Take which they report has helped them in their mentoring roles. They thought the fact that the young people actually interviewed them was a good idea and helped to empower the young people. Their reported experience of mentoring young people on the Give and Take programme was mixed. Some of the mentors reported that they found some of the young people a challenge and have proven difficult to support while other mentors report that they have developed excellent supporting relationships with young people. They reported that often the young people break commitments at the last minute, with no explanation or reason provided. The mentors also concluded that it takes a significant amount of time and effort to develop trusting relationships with the young people, which is not surprising given the experiences some of these young people have been through. Some mentors comments included;

*"I find it really frustrating and really challenging at times"*

*"I didn't know about this other world, didn't have a clue what it was like"*

*"It has been an eye opener and a real experience for me"*

Programme records show that the number of young people who have received one to one mentoring support is 41. This equates to 23% of young people participating on the programme. The award of funding for mentoring was approved at the start of Year 2 of ESF funding which explains why this figure is low. It is the aim of the programme that eventually all young people participating will be offered to be matched with a mentor.

Of the young people consulted who have a mentor, they advised that they meet with their mentors on a regular basis, usually to attend events, have a snack together, go the cinema etc. The mentors provide another perspective on the many things happening in the young person's life. Feedback from young people in respect to the mentoring support they have received has been very positive. One young person commented at the focus group *"Mentors are good, someone you can talk to outside of the family and programme"*. Another described his mentor as *"brilliant"* and someone he can really trust. One example of a very positive mentoring experience was provided by a female who was mentoring a young male. She stated that the young person had no positive female influences in their life. She was able to develop a positive relationship over time with the young person, attending football matches, meeting for lunches etc. She was able to listen and offer advice when requested, helping the young person make better informed decisions in difficult times.

The personal development support package that is offered through Give and Take differentiates it from most other employability programmes. This is a very positive aspect of the programme and is much needed to support young people who have been unable to engage and sustain other more mainstream training programmes. The challenge for staff however is enabling young people to move on at the end of their time on the programme,

back into mainstream, without this level of support. Staff have voiced their concerns for some of the young people and some of the young people consulted acknowledged that they had some apprehensions about moving onto a mainstream training and education environment, albeit that they knew that this was inevitable. Potentially the role of the mentor will be important in facilitating this transition. For those young people matched with a mentor, they have the support of their mentor for one year. Given that mentors will tend to be matched once a young person has been on the programme for a period of time (e.g. 3 months) and assuming that the young person will leave Give and Take after one year, this provides a support mechanism for the young person beyond their time on the programme. This is an important aspect of the mentoring support as it is recognised that young people are at greatest risk at times of transition.

## 2.7 Work Experience

Supporting young people with the work experience option of Give and Take is the responsibility of the Project Worker. A significant change to the Give and Take Scheme has been the recruitment of an Employability Coordinator to support this element of the programme. Traditionally Give and Take focused upon getting young people into a work placement but typically the young people were not ready for and unable to sustain this placement and as a result drop out was high. It was recognised by Give and Take staff that there was much work needed to be done with the young people to prepare them for a working environment and also to develop their self confidence to enable them to feel comfortable in a strange environment. It was also identified that young people had little knowledge of the types of jobs potentially they might like and therefore there was a need to introduce young people to job opportunities across a range of sectors. The Employability Coordinator therefore has worked with the Project Workers, introducing options that are focused upon the capability and readiness of each young person for work. These options include;

**a) Work Prep** – this is a group based programme for those young people who do not yet know what areas of work they want to explore, who have little or no understanding of the working world and who need more support before attempting an individual placement experience. The emphasis of this programme is on developing and reinforcing employability skills. This is assisted by the recent introduction of Rickter to this area of work which is completed by the young person during discussion with the Project Worker. Unlike the induction programme which used the life board overlay, the Project Worker introduces the Rickter employability overlay to identify priority areas for support or intervention in respect to developing the young person's employability skills. The areas assessed are;

- Motivation
- Confidence about the future
- Communication
- Support
- Core skills
- Work Skills
- Readiness

- Type of work
- Job application
- Interview preparation.

Work Prep activities focus upon young people planning, implementing and reviewing group tasks / activities on a three weekly cycle. For example, as a group the young people will visit an employer to see the premises and talk about specific job roles within this business or participate in volunteering days for other organisations. Young people are prepared in advance of this visit in respect to identifying questions they will ask that will increase their level of knowledge about the work environment and job roles within it. They will then find out as much as they can while on the visit and discuss and review the visit on their return to Give and Take.

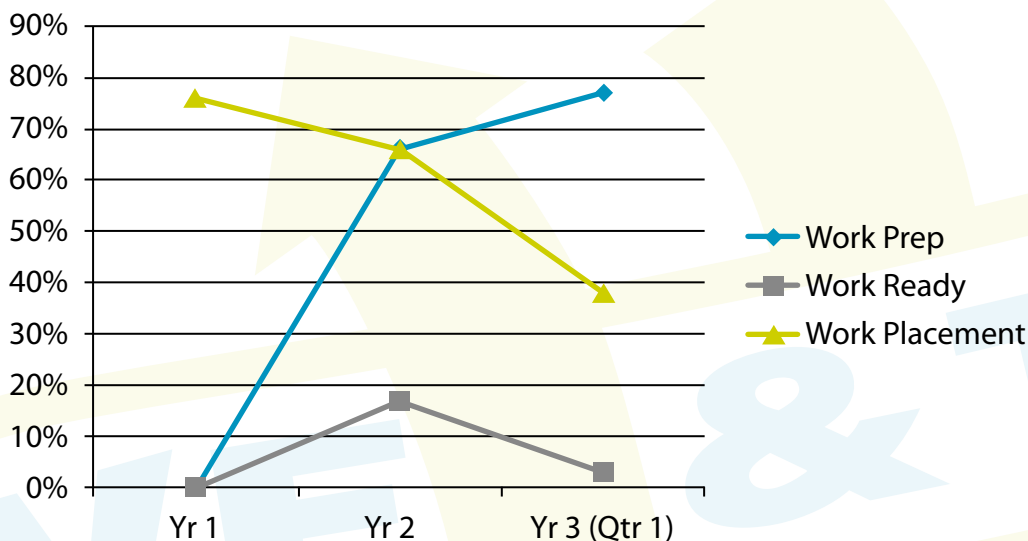
**b) Work Ready** – this approach focuses upon the individual young person, exploring the career options that interest them. Project Workers facilitate a range of work taster experiences for the young person, with an emphasis on sampling the work. These taster sessions will involve the Project Worker accompanying the young person to the placement, staying with them and working alongside them. This experience will then be reviewed by the young person, discussing with their Project Worker what they liked and did not like about the experience and assessing their sense of job readiness to sustain an unaccompanied longer term work placement.

**c) Work Well** – when a young person has successfully completed at least two job taster experiences at Work Ready stage they are encouraged to take on a longer work placement which will initially be for a two to four week trial period. The Project Worker arranges the placement for the young person, will visit the employer in advance, will visit the young person weekly and will review after four weeks how the placement is going and if it will be extended for a further four week period.

Programme monitoring records show that the percentage of young people engaging in an extended work placement has declined over the three years to date as illustrated in figure 2.



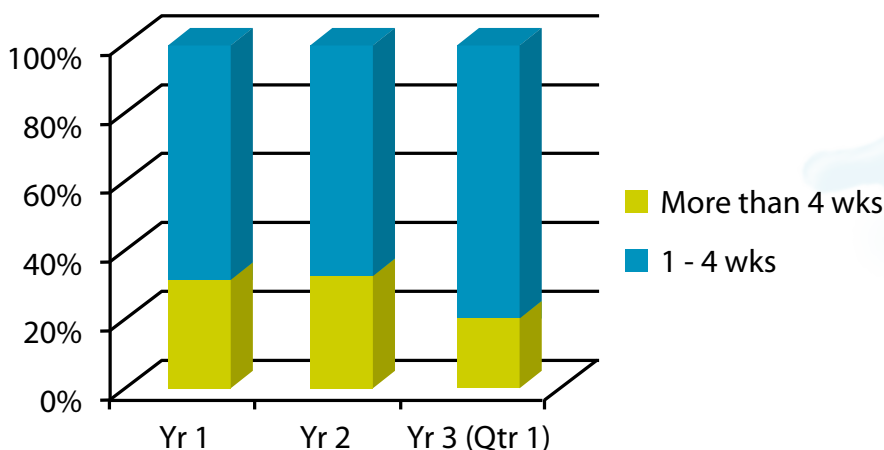
**Fig. 2: Participation in Work Experience Options**



In Year 1 the Work Prep and Work Ready activities were not available as the Employability Coordinator had only come into post. The focus in Year 1 was therefore to get young people into a work placement. In this year 76% of young people who completed induction engaged in a work placement. In Years 2 and 3 there is a greater focus on Work Prep and Work Ready and only those young people who are ready for placement are offered an opportunity, with 66% of young people who completed induction in Year 2 taking up a placement and for the first quarter of Year 3 this figure was 38%.

Further analysis of programme monitoring records indicate that of those young people who take up a placement, the majority sustain their placement for longer than four weeks as shown in figure 3. In Years 1 and 2 approximately two thirds of those who entered into a work placement stayed for more than 4 weeks and in Year 3 to date 79% have sustained a placement for longer than 4 weeks.

**Fig. 3: Engagement in Extended Work Placement**



Feedback from young people has confirmed that they enjoy and see the benefit of the work experience options;

*"It's a chance to get out and do different things"*

*"Work preparation gives you a chance to see how others do their work and see how I would get along"*

*"Homebase has been good, I like getting the experience of the work, and I have good craic with the staff. They have been good at showing me what to do, taught me new things and made me feel like part of the team. So far I've enjoyed the experience."*

*"I was a bit wary of the job to begin with, but David showed me the ropes and now I know what to do - so when I go into work I can just get on with it."*

Finding work placements is the responsibility of the Project Workers in each area, who are tasked with matching the needs and interests of the young person with a local employer who the young person can access easily. One of the roles of the Employability Coordinator has been to assist the Project Workers to identify employers. There is an employer's database within Give and Take which the Employability Coordinator has sought to develop with the inclusion of new employers. This work has focused upon making contact with employers directly and presenting at events with an employer audience. For example;

- 6 presentations were made at Equality Commission events across Northern Ireland between March 2009 and March 2010 at which approximately 20 to 30 employers were in attendance at each event
- A presentation was made to Business in Community's Care Leadership team which includes representation from large employers such as;
  - Marks & Spencer
  - Northern Ireland Civil Service
  - HBOS
  - National Trust
  - Bombardier Aerospace
  - Police Service of Northern Ireland
  - Northern Ireland Housing Executive
  - BT.

The Employability Coordinator has focused upon making direct contact with large employers (primarily retailers) with regional premises who can offer placement opportunities across Northern Ireland, for example;

- Homebase
- B&Q
- Halfords
- Debenhams
- Tesco
- Sainsburys
- Aramark/Campbell Catering.

Currently the Give and Take central database includes approximately 800 employers. The businesses included are those that can provide entry level work experience opportunities and include for example;

- DIY large retailers
- Other retailers
- Supermarkets
- Catering outlets
- Bars / restaurants
- Animal related businesses
- Beauty / hairdressers
- Cleaning
- Recycling
- Leisure centres
- Councils (Belfast, Ballymena, Coleraine, Newtownabbey, Cookstown, Omagh, Derry, Dungannon and South Tyrone, Newry & Mourne)
- Charities
- Childcare
- Offices
- Mechanical workshops
- Joinery
- Warehouses
- Gardening.

This is a useful resource that Project Workers can access when arranging work related activities.

Consultation with a sample of employers has confirmed that they are very happy with their experiences with Give and Take in providing work experience opportunities for young people. The comment below is indicative of employer feedback;

*"The concept of work tasters and work placements have been received positively across all of our stores and we truly see this as a great way to support people in gaining work experience in a retail environment and also to welcome people back into the workplace and provide a platform for them to learn new skills and enhance existing skills."* (Lynsey Gardiner, Human Resources Business Partner – Homebase Northern Ireland.)

The Employability Coordinator has developed a more structured and formalised work placement process to work experiences on Give and Take, with the introduction of;

- Guidelines for placement providers (including clarification on insurance, health and safety, roles and responsibilities, induction and general do's and don'ts)
- Guidelines for Project Workers
- Guidelines for Volunteers
- Volunteer agreement form
- Placement review form.

All employers report that they were well briefed for the work placement and report that the young people were also well prepared for the work environment. They report that the young people worked hard and integrated well into their staff team.

A challenge facing Give and Take staff is the current economic climate. Many businesses are facing difficult and uncertain times and therefore may not be in a position to offer work placement opportunities especially if they are going through staffing redundancies or reducing staff hours. Opportunities for job tasters and placements are therefore difficult within this climate. The 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010 budget and cuts proposed across all Northern Ireland government departments also impact upon the local economy. The employability component of Give and Take will need to adapt and respond to the economic challenges outlined in order to ensure that young people on the scheme continue to benefit from work experience and exposure to the real world of work.

## **2.8 Exit Strategy**

Once the young person has been on the Give and Take Scheme for nine months, staff focus upon the development of an exit strategy for each that will outline the activities they will engage in within their final three months with the programme. The purpose of the exit strategy is;

- to ensure that the young person completes their training and achieves the qualifications available



- to put in place the support needed to facilitate completion of the programme within the three months
- to facilitate a visit to the DEL Careers Adviser
- to look at other training and / or employment options with the young person beyond the Give and Take Scheme that they would be interested in and to assist them in applying for these options
- to focus work experience options on possible move on opportunities.

As part of the exit strategy process it is also intended that each young person would complete another Rickter assessment. This would enable staff to make an assessment of the distance travelled by each young participant during their time with the programme. However, as discussed previously many young people do not undergo a second Rickter assessment. Consultation with Personal Development / Mentoring Workers has indicated that while Rickter is valued as an assessment and planning tool its worth as an evaluation tool is not completely understood by staff.

The inclusion of an exit strategy process is essential to ensure that each young person is equipped and ready to move on from Give and Take. Consultation with young people and with staff has indicated that the introduction of the exit strategy process can however at times have a detrimental effect on a young person's progress. For those young people who do not feel ready to leave the programme discussion about moving on can make them feel that they are being abandoned by people whom they have grown to trust. While in the minority, there have been instances when this can cause a young person to disengage for a time. However, through the excellent relationships with staff such young people are reengaged and if needed, an extension period discussed.

It is the role of the Project Worker to help the young person to identify move on options and to assist their transition. Programme monitoring records show that in Years 1 and 2 approximately two thirds of young people who completed induction moved on to something (60% in Year 1 and 61% in Year 2). The move on options recorded are;

- education, training or employment (38% Year 1 and 41% Year 2)
- applying for jobs / courses (14% Year 1 and 10% Year 2), referred to DEL Careers Adviser (3% in Year 1 and 10% in Year 2)
- Voluntary Work (5% in Year 1).

The Give and Take programme is scheduled to last for one year although some flexibility has been shown to those young people who require more than one years support, for example;

- a) where a young person is due to start another course or programme that is a number of months away, Give and Take will allow them to stay on the programme until they are due to start. This ensures that the young person remains in a positive and structured programme of activity and not left with nothing to do for a period.

- b) In some cases Social Workers have requested additional time for a young person who is not considered ready yet to move into mainstream training or education.

Consultation with Health and Social Care staff and Give and Take staff has highlighted that flexibility is considered to be very important in respect to the length of time that an individual can remain on the programme. Give and Take monitoring records do not record how long those who have participated have remained on the programme therefore it is not possible to assess the level of demand there has been to date for extended engagement. However consultation with Give and Take staff would suggest that approximately 50% of young people may require extended engagement. Those that typically require additional support are those with a learning disability and poor essential skills. As previously discussed, 70% of participants on the Give and Take Scheme have essential skills difficulties.

Consultation with Social Workers has highlighted that while in general communication between Give and Take and themselves is very good, they have reported that they would welcome more formalised and structured communication in respect to the exit strategy process. It was clear that there was a lack of awareness by Social Workers of the qualifications that each young person has attained and / or the work experience activities that they have engaged in and they would welcome a report on each young person detailing all that they have achieved.



### 3.0 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Performance of the Give and Take Scheme is assessed in respect to the attainment of programme aims and associated performance targets. The aims of the scheme are to improve the long term employability of young people and to enhance their self esteem and self confidence. While specific key performance indicators have been set to;

- i) support 374 young people over three years on the scheme
- ii) achieve at least 90% occupancy from referrals from each of the five Health Trusts
- iii) achieve 90% completion rate for young people on the scheme
- iv) help 25% to 50% of participants into employment
- v) provide 50% to 74% of participants with at least one qualification
- vi) 70% of young people have a positive move on from the scheme
- vii) 50% of young people achieve an Essential Skills qualification
- viii) 80% of young people can demonstrate an increase in self esteem or confidence.

#### 3.1 Recruitment

Programme monitoring records show that a total of 231 young people have engaged on the scheme to date which is 143 short of the target set in 2008 when Include Youth was applying for ESF funding. Year 3 figures are for the period April to June 2010 so there is still nine months to run in Year 3. However based on past annual average intake it is considered unlikely that the target of 374 will be attained.

**Table 7: Give and Take Recruitment**

| Year 1<br>2008/09 | Year 2<br>2009/10 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr of Year 3<br>2010/11 | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|-------|
| 127               | 81                | 23                                       | 231   |

However it is important to contextualise this performance. Firstly the target of 374 equates to supporting approximately 125 young people annually. When we review participation rates the number of young people engaged annually with Give and Take is achieving and in fact exceeding the ESF target.

**Table 8: Participation on Give and Take**

| Year 1<br>2008/09 | Year 2<br>2009/10 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr of Year 3<br>2010/11 |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 127               | 141               | 93                                       |

There is an issue in that many young people are not leaving the programme after 12 months. For example, 60 young people that started in Year 1 were still on the programme in Year 2 and in Year 3, 70 of the young people engaged were carried over from Year 2.

One of the factors which contribute towards Give and Take’s success is that recruitment is continuous, in other words there is a rolling process of referrals and recruitment onto the scheme. This means that exact numbers as provided in the ESF application are difficult to record as in any one period there may be young people who, for understandable reasons, may still be on the scheme 15 months after joining.

### 3.2 Retention

The Give and Take Scheme has set itself a target of achieving a 90% completion rate for young people on the scheme. Completion is considered to be once young people have finished their induction period and programme records show that 78.4% of young people to date have completed induction, with 21.6% leaving before completing. When figures are assessed annually they show that the proportion of young people sustaining engagement in induction (i.e. completed or progressing) is improving annually, with 80% in Year 1, 86% in Year 2 and to date in Year 3, 95%.

Further analysis of monitoring records shows that not all young people, once they have completed induction, will complete the remainder of the Give and Take Programme. Programme records show that to date a further 29.8% have left the programme for the following reasons;

- Family commitments
- Lack of interest /refused to engage
- Ill health
- Prison
- Left the country.

The drop out of young people at this stage has however been declining, as a percentage of numbers engaged annually with the programme. Of the young people that are retained on the programme beyond induction Table 9 illustrates the annual retention rates.

**Table 9: Retention Beyond Programme Induction**

| Year 1<br>2008/09 | Year 2<br>2009/10 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr of Year 3<br>2010/11 |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 74%               | 77%               | 84%                                      |

The total number of young people that have left the scheme without completing is 120 to date (50 before induction and 70 after induction). These figures are high and represent 52% of the young people that start the programme. Of these, 30 (25%) have been considered to be due to inappropriate referrals.

Based upon this performance it is considered that the target of achieving a 90% completion rate for young people on the scheme was overly ambitious.

### 3.3 Employment

Give and Take has a performance target to help 25 – 50% of participants into employment. ESF returns would indicate that this figure has not been achieved. As shown in Table 10, of those young people who moved on in Years 1 and 2 a total of 9 have moved into employment which equates to 11% over the first two years.

**Table 10: Young People Moving into Employment**

| Year 1<br>2008/09 | Year 2<br>2009/10 |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 4 (10%)           | 5 (11%)           |

Consultation with Health and Social Care staff would indicate that their expectations of Give and Take are not that young people will get a job at the end of the programme but rather that they will move into mainstream education or training. Their expectation is that young people will improve their employability skills and become more aware of the need to further their educational qualifications and skills beyond Give and Take. It is considered that the target of helping 25 – 50% of participants into employment is too high and unattainable for Give and Take in the current economic climate.

### 3.4 To provide 50 – 74% of participants with at least one qualification

As discussed previously Give and Take has significantly enhanced its outcome based focus in respect to the attainment of qualifications for young people. Programme monitoring records show that over the period April 2008 to June 2010 78% of participants have completed induction with one qualification.

It would be useful to detail what percentage of participants have achieved 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 qualifications. However monitoring records do not enable an assessment to be made of this information.

### 3.5 70% of young people have a positive move on from the scheme

A “positive move on” is considered to be those young people who leave the programme to pursue their goal for further education, training or a job. Programme monitoring records show that to date 53.5% of young people that move on leave for one or other of these reasons. This is less than the performance target for the programme and while it is a target that the programme should aspire towards, dropout rates of young people who have completed induction need to be factored into this target.

**Table 11: Nos of Young People with a Positive Move On**

| Yr                      | Nos Leaving | Nos With Positive Move On <sup>1</sup> | % with positive move on |
|-------------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|
| 1                       | 66          | 36                                     | 54.5%                   |
| 2                       | 73          | 44                                     | 60%                     |
| 3 (1 <sup>st</sup> qtr) | 20          | 5                                      | 25%                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | 159         | 85                                     | 53.5%                   |

### 3.6 50% of young people achieve an Essential Skills Qualification

To date 231 young people have participated on the Give and Take Scheme. Accounting for a drop out of 21.6% before induction was complete, this equates to a total of 181 engaging in training beyond induction. Based upon this participation figure, programme records show that for essential skills awards;

- 70% of participants achieved their essential skills qualification in numeracy
- 67% of participants achieved their essential skills qualification in literacy

**Table 12: Essential Skills Qualifications Awarded**

| Yr                            | Numeracy | Literacy |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b>                      | 17       | 19       |
| <b>2</b>                      | 63       | 47       |
| <b>3 (1<sup>st</sup> qtr)</b> | 13       | 11       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | 93       | 77       |

This is an excellent achievement for the programme and reflects the participant profile which shows that 70% of young people starting Give and Take have essential skills difficulties. This performance is significantly improved since Give and Take employed their own Essential Skills Tutors in house who have been able to deliver training at a pace that suits the needs and ability of the young people on the scheme.



### **3.7 80% of young people can demonstrate an increase in self esteem or confidence**

Give and Take staff do not have a formalised system in place that enables them to provide evidence of performance in respect to this target. It is recommended that Rickter should be used to measure distance travelled of young people at the end of the programme, using an overlay that will determine what impact engagement with Give and Take has had on enhancing self esteem and self confidence.

However despite the fact that there is no hard evidence, the widespread consultation that has been undertaken to inform this evaluation has highlighted much anecdotal evidence of the very positive impact that Give and Take has had on improving the self confidence and self esteem of young people participating on the programme. This is demonstrated through changes reported in the young people in respect to their;

- Willingness to engage long term with the programme
- Success in attaining qualifications
- Positive attitude regarding their future
- Moving from one to one to group work activities
- Improved communication skills
- Engagement in Include Youth central activities outside of Give and Take
- Improved resilience and ability to cope better with personal circumstances
- Improved interaction with their Social Worker, seeking help before crisis hits.

Further evidence of the impact of the programme is demonstrated in the case study profiles of five young people.

#### **Case Study 5**

John is 18 years of age and has been in care, living in a residential home for children, since he was 10. John was referred to Give and Take because he was unwilling to commit to a full time course at his local further education college. He has literacy and numeracy difficulties and has a problem with alcohol misuse which resulted in him engaging in aggressive and anti social behaviour. Before Give and Take his daily life lacked routine and structure and he tended to spend his days sleeping in bed.

John's Social Worker referred him to Give and Take because she felt that the approach adopted by the scheme would suit John's needs and his ability. Despite his literacy and numeracy difficulties she describes him as an intelligent young man. John is keen to get a job and therefore his Social Worker felt that Give and Take would help to improve his essential skills and motivate him to focus on his future. She reports in her referral form that John has low self esteem as a result of the stigma of being in care.

The Give and Take Project Worker reports that initially John appeared to be motivated and keen to engage in the programme. However he was drinking during the week and after a while, was missing classes or turning up while still under the influence of alcohol. This was unacceptable and the Project Worker spoke to John to discuss the issue. John reported that he still wanted to continue with the programme and the Project Worker agreed to let him stay and appointed a mentor to provide additional support to him. The Project Worker reports that the appointment of a mentor *"was the turning point"*. John is very interested in football and supports his local soccer team. A mentor was appointed who had a similar interest and went with John to local football matches at the weekend. John's engagement with Give and Take improved. The Project Worker reports that his attendance *"shot up"* and he became much more open and communicative with staff. He now engages well and participates in group based activities and *"puts great effort into everything"*.

Initially John didn't attend the essential skills classes because he felt that he wasn't capable. However with the support of staff he is now attending essential skills and working through at his own pace. He reports during his consultation that he finds the work *"doable"* and says that *"it's easier to get work done here than anywhere else"*. *"You get all the help when you need it"*. He also enjoys the social side of Give and Take and relates well to the young people on the programme as well as the staff who he describes as *"brilliant, laid back and always a laugh"*. He says *"I couldn't be anywhere if I wasn't happy with the staff"*.

John believes that he has matured as a result of coming onto Give and Take. He says that he is now *"waking up to things"* and *"I have my wits about me"*. He has completed his qualifications and sustained a 6 week work placement in a local restaurant. As a result he feels that he is more employable. His Social Worker reports that she too can see great changes in John. For example;

- His communication skills have improved
- He is not as *"cocky"* as he was previously but has honed his self confidence skills
- He now contacts his Social Worker when he feels the need for help rather than letting things escalate to crisis point
- He can manage himself better and has become more independent
- He has an interest in further training and is motivated about his future
- He is much more reliable.

The Social Worker reports that Give and Take has been John's *"most permanent structure"*. His time on the programme is due to come to an end and John reports that initially when staff began to discuss possible exit strategies with him he was *"raging"* and said to staff *"if you close me now you close me to nothing"*. A six month extension was approved to facilitate his transition into another training course and he was advised that he can always avail of the drop in facility at the Give and Take office. The Project Worker advises however that he still has fears about John's transition to mainstream education. His academic ability is low and without the support he has had through Give and Take he is concerned about his ability to cope.

## 4.0 STRATEGIC IMPACT

The Give and Take Scheme is positively impacting upon current Northern Ireland policy direction. There is an increasing recognition that the NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) group requires a focus over and beyond what is currently provided for. A recent report titled '*A Scoping Study of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Northern Ireland*' provided an in depth analysis of the particular NEET group, identified relevant actions in place (including Include Youth) and concluded with a small number of recommendations.

The report highlights:

- The latest Labour Force Survey figures show that for 16-19 year olds the figures for Northern Ireland stand at 13% or 13,000 (LFS 2010, Quarter 1) of which approximately 10,140 (78%) or about 10% of the total 16-19 age group could be classified as NEET
- The NEET group is not homogenous and comprises young people with no barriers to participation and those who have barriers to participation
- The barriers to participation are varied and inter-related and many young people are affected by multiple and compounded issues. These factors may extend back through generations
- Actions to prevent or reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training can be divided into Preventative and Intervention or Re-engagement. For preventative actions to be effective, intervention must be at an early enough stage
- The danger points for young people are the transitional stages when one form of activity ends and conscious decision needs to be made as to the next engagement
- Much is being done by the statutory and voluntary sector to address these issues: including joint working between organisations. There is potential to develop existing activities further to:



- Improve data availability
- Build on joint working; and
- Share and make use of good practice
- The report recommends the preparation of an overarching strategy for NEET. It also highlighted that account should be taken of the large amount of work which has already been undertaken by departments and the voluntary and community sector in respect of young people who are at risk of disengaging or who are already not in education, employment or training. It recommends that baseline data needs to be established before targets are set. Rather than focusing on a reduction in the number of NEET's, targets should instead relate to the numbers of young people who receive support and the nature of the intervention.

**Action Required:**

Include Youth needs to be at the centre of future discussions / input around the NEET strategy. Already progress is being made and Include Youth are part of a voluntary / community sector development.

**4.1 Department for Employment & Learning (DEL)**

DEL has responsibility to 'promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy' (DEL Aim, 2010). Particular services provided by DEL which impact upon the work of Give and Take include:

- Careers Service
- Essential Skills Strategy
- Training for Success Programme.

**4.1.1 Careers Service**

The Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to young people and adults throughout NI. The service is provided by Careers Advisers located within Jobs and Benefits Offices and Careers Offices. The Careers Service has developed networks / partnership agreements with a number of organisations who act as advocates for young people with varying barriers to education, training and employment. The Careers Service recently entered into an 'Operational Partnership Agreement' with Include Youth (Give and Take Scheme) which aims to provide the Give and Take Scheme with a menu of services available from each local careers service office, in addition to providing the framework for ongoing review of the provision provided by both organisations. The Partnership Agreement has been nominated by DEL for a national award at the 2010 ICG Annual Careers Conference later this year in Belfast<sup>3</sup>.

3 At the time of the evaluation going to print the Include Youth and DEL Careers Service partnership had been successful in winning this award

### 4.1.2 Essential Skills Strategy

Essential Skills support is designed to enable adults to improve their overall quality of life, their personal development, and their employment opportunities by addressing their weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The International Adult Literacy Survey concluded that 24% of adults in NI were deemed to be functioning at the most basic level of literacy and numeracy. The figures provided by Give and Take indicate that over 70% of the young people they work with operate at this most basic of levels. Give and Take has experienced a significant improvement in respect to the provision of essential skills training since it recruited its own tutors through a successful ESF application. Although a comparatively expensive option the increase in costs are more than justified when outputs are factored in. Of the 231 young people who have participated on the Give and Take Scheme 70% have gained their essential skills qualification in numeracy and 67% achieved their essential skills qualification in literacy.

#### Action Required:

Include Youth to continue to provide essential skills training through their own team of trainers. Include Youth to enter into discussion with DEL as to the potential to provide others within the NEET group access to their essential skills programme.

### 4.1.3 Training for Success

Training for Success (TfS) is targeted at 16-24 year olds, allowing them to enter training at an appropriate level and progress to a stage where they can maximise their potential through the development of personal and employability skills and the achievement of qualifications and employment. It is delivered through two components:

- a. Personal Development / Skills for Your Life – to address the personal and development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and / or have significant obstacles
- b. Skills for Work – to help young people gain skills and a vocational related qualification at Level 1 to be able to gain employment or to progress to an apprenticeship.

Give and Take is a specialist provider on the TfS programme and works with ten training organisations in Northern Ireland. Typically, training organisations will ask for Include Youth to work with young people who have additional needs which they cannot provide for. The profile of these young people is typically those most at risk, difficult to work with, marginalised and vulnerable. The specialist support services are provided through one to one mentoring (purchased in by provider) and through the provision of the 'Getting Ahead' programme which is a 12 week personal development programme accredited by OCNNI at Level 1. These interventions have proved to be extremely successful.

**Action Required:**

Include Youth to hold discussions with DEL and consider if they should bid to be a TfS provider.

Include Youth to promote their services more extensively to other training organisations. Someone in Give and Take needs to take onboard responsibility for marketing and promotion.

Include Youth to consider establishing a social enterprise training arm of the organisation which could manage, promote and deliver bespoke training products throughout NI and beyond.

**4.1.4 DEL Skills Strategy, 2010 (Consultative Document)**

The skills strategy forecasts that in the future in NI there will be:

- An increased need for higher level skills
- An increased need for the up-skilling of the existing workforce
- A need to reduce sectoral imbalances
- An increased need for management and leadership skills; and
- A need to attract skilled labour.



The strategy focuses on increasing the skills levels of the NI labour force. It is less applicable to the work carried out by Give and Take as its key focus is to enhance skills levels from Level 2 and above. Typically, Give and Take works with young people at Level 1 (a small number fall into Level 2). However, it retains a commitment to deliver essential skills which remains critical if Give and Take is to meet its targets. It is important to consider the Skills Strategy alongside the Scoping Study of the NEET group which states:

*“rather than focus on a reduction in the number not in education, employment or training, targets could instead relate to the numbers of young people who receive support and the nature of the intervention, for example the provision of personal action plans for those with the most challenging barriers to engagement.”*

A Scoping Study for those NEET in NI (Page 11, 2.23)

### Action Required:

Include Youth to consult with DEL / DEL Assembly Committee to ensure that the needs of the young people they represent and support are met within the new Skills Strategy.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the Give and Take Scheme is an excellent programme that is reported by each of the Health and Social Care Trusts to be much needed. The aim of the programme is to enhance the employability and self confidence of young people at risk of social exclusion across Northern Ireland and there is much evidence to support that this has been achieved. Young people are more employable because of;

- The qualifications they have attained
- Their greater awareness of employability related skills which are needed in the workplace and the development of such skills
- Their improved behaviour and self awareness
- Their work experience
- Their increased feelings of self worth
- Their positive focus on the future.

Those around them (Social Workers and Give and Take staff) report that unquestionably the self confidence of all young people has improved. These young people are stigmatised because of their care background and compounded by their essential skills difficulties, which has resulted in them dropping out of education as “failures”, they lack self belief. Their experience with Give and Take has been one characterised by positivity and achievement and through the respect and empathy shown by Give and Take staff, they are beginning to have a belief in their ability.

Critical success factors of the programme are considered to be;

- The person centred approach which ensures that each young person engages at a level and ability that meets their needs
- The flexibility of one to one and group based activities to meet the needs of the young people
- The support structures available to the young people in terms of the Project Worker, Personal Development / Mentoring Worker and mentor
- The empathy of the staff and their approach and interaction with the young people
- The focus upon both academic and personal development qualifications
- The accessibility of the scheme locally across Northern Ireland
- The fact that the programme lasts for one year, with an option to extend for those most in need.

It is this complete package that differentiates Give and Take from all other programmes currently available. When asked if the programme should be sustained Health and Social Care staff were unanimous in their response that it should most definitely be sustained. They do not have an alternative equivalent to refer their young people to. It is concluded therefore that there is a need to sustain Give and Take to ensure that young people in the care system who have dropped out of mainstream education and training;

- Can be supported to enhance their academic ability
- Are provided with opportunities to develop their employability skills
- Are supported to develop their self confidence and self worth and not to feel stigmatised because of their background.

A number of conclusions are made in respect to specific areas of programme activity.

## **5.1 Participation**

To date the Give and Take Scheme has supported 231 young people (April 2008 to June 2010). This is 143 short of the target of supporting 374 young people over the duration of their ESF funding and it is considered that the target of 374 is unlikely to be achieved by the end of March 2011. This is dictated by the fact that, as discussed previously, many young people are staying with the programme for longer than the anticipated one year and also 100% of places are occupied by Health and Social Care Trust referrals, who collectively have agreed to support 74 places annually on the programme. If the scheme is to continue to work with only HSCT referrals then the target number of young people needs to be reduced to reflect this.

## **5.2 Completion**

The Give and Take Scheme has set themselves a target of ensuring that 90% of young people complete the programme. Give and Take consider "completion" to mean when a young



person has completed induction which is approximately only three months of an anticipated 12 month programme. It is considered that this is somewhat misleading and that completion should be expressed both in terms of those that complete induction and those that complete the remainder of the programme. Programme records show that to date 78.4% of young people that started the programme have completed induction. Following induction a further 29.8% left the programme due to personal circumstances or a lack of interest. The total number of young people that have left the scheme without completing is 120 to date (50 before induction and 70 after induction). These figures are high and represent 52% of the young people that start the programme. Of these, 30 (25%) have been considered to be due to inappropriate referrals. The issue of inappropriate referrals has been raised by Give and Take staff and is being addressed by developing better communication with the Gatekeepers in each of the areas to develop improved understanding in respect to the type of young person that is best suited to Give and Take.

Taking into consideration all of the above, the target of achieving a 90% completion rate is considered to be high. The target group is characterised by a history of non engagement and therefore the Give and Take programme has perhaps set a somewhat ambitious target that should be reduced.

### 5.3 Programme Management

Give and Take is a well managed and well delivered programme that involves a team of 27 staff. It is a dynamic team of enthusiastic, motivated and extremely passionate people who believe in the capability of all young people that come onto the scheme. Consultation

with the Trusts and young people has indicated that the staff within Give and Take are extremely well thought of and respected. They have developed an excellent programme of activities that combines both personal development, academic qualifications, work experience and the opportunity for social interaction into a programme that is achieving very tangible results. Staff are continually looking at ways to improve upon the programme and there is much evidence of amendments and improvements that have been adopted to date and suggestions currently for improvements that will further enhance Give and Take opportunities for young people.

Include Youth has become very focused upon the need to show evidence of outcomes and achievement within the Give and Take Scheme and operates a central monitoring database to record information on all of the young people. Consultation with staff indicates that the central monitoring database is a burdensome resource that requires a lot of data input and from which they personally see little benefit. As part of this evaluation process the database was reviewed and it would appear that it is a rather detailed and complicated system which is not being used to its full capability. However it is questionable whether Give and Take actually require the full capability of such a system. It is understood that currently staff are reviewing the database and recommendations are made in the following section of this report which may help to focus attention on monitoring requirements that would help to inform performance.

#### **5.4 Referral Process**

The referral and Gatekeeping process differs somewhat in each Trust area. Despite this however the process works well, with the quota of places being filled annually. The role of the Gatekeeper is important to ensure that only those young people who are in most need of support and will get most benefit from the programme are referred. It is at the discretion of the Gatekeepers to define what constitutes greatest need and it is evident that such criteria vary between Trusts. This can result in some Trusts referring young people with complex needs who are difficult to engage. However it is considered that for such young people Give and Take is a last resort and if it does not work out for them then it is unlikely that any other scheme will work for them. Evidence has shown that Give and Take staff are excellent at persevering with young people and there is a need for a recognition within the programme that a certain level of young people will drop out by the very nature of their personal circumstances. This is no criticism of the work of the programme and while Give and Take staff may look upon it as an inappropriate referral, there are others who will view it as a last chance for the respective young person.

The motivation to engage is an important determining factor in respect to the overall success of the programme for each young person. In some areas the Project Worker may meet with the young person before a decision is made to offer them a place. This provides an opportunity for the Project Worker to assess the level of motivation and interest of the young person. This information is fed back at the Gatekeeping meeting and a collective decision made on the appropriateness of the referral. Evidence has shown that even for those young people exhibiting complex issues, if they are motivated and interested in the programme they will achieve a very positive experience.

### 5.5 Training

The use of ESF funding to employ in house training staff has seen a significant improvement in the attainment of outcomes for the young people engaged on the scheme. As a result of ESF funding;

- Give and Take now offers six accredited qualifications
- There is a changed culture within the programme and training has become more formalised. This is reflected in the training hours young people have engaged in which have increased from 3,000 to 8,000 hours. Opting out of training is no longer an option on the programme
- Training has become more person centred and staff can tailor training to suit the needs of the young people, providing additional one to one support when needed
- Young people are now attaining their essential skills qualifications. This is evidenced by the results which show that since moving to in house delivery the attainment of essential skills qualifications has increased dramatically.

### 5.6 Personal Development

Young people on the Give and Take Scheme have many personal issues and it is concluded that the Personal Development work of the programme is essential to addressing their self esteem, self confidence and health and wellbeing issues. For many, in addition to the academic barriers they have, their own personal issues are also barriers to them engaging in mainstream education or training. It is essential that personal self esteem and self confidence are developed to ensure that young people will be able to sustain the benefits of the Give and Take programme and progress successfully into education, training or employment. Evidence would suggest that the programme is having a significant impact on the personal development of the young people engaged.

One observation however is that unfortunately Give and Take does not track young people once they have left the programme. It would be useful to determine where the young people are now, having completed the scheme, to see if they have sustained a positive move on from Give and Take.

## **5.7 Mentoring**

It is somewhat early to making any definitive conclusions on the mentoring input to Give and Take. Mentors have only recently been recruited and Give and Take staff have been training and matching those who have been recruited. However, of those young people who have received a mentor, the experience reported has been very positive. It is considered that the role of the mentor will be particularly important once the young person leaves Give and Take and that the timing of the appointment of a mentor should be considered carefully to allow at least six months engagement beyond closure from the Give and Take programme. This support structure will be important as there are still concerns voiced for the Give and Take young people who move into mainstream education or training in respect to the lack of support that they will receive compared to Give and Take.

## **5.8 Work Experience**

The employment of an Employability Coordinator has influenced significant change to the Give and Take Scheme in respect to the exposure of young people to work experiences. The move away from extended work placement to a gradual work prep, work ready and then work placement has been much more suited to the needs of the young people. This process has benefitted the young people in that;

- They are now more aware of career options
- They have developed their employability skills
- They have received a personality test through MAPS which has helped to identify what types of jobs they may be suited to
- They have visited different employers and engaged in a variety of work tasks
- They have employability related qualifications
- They have engaged in an extended work placement.

The Employability Coordinator has also helped to formalise the work experience aspect of the programme and has raised awareness with employers of the Give and Take Scheme.

## **5.9 Exit Strategy**

The inclusion of an exit strategy process is an excellent mechanism for ensuring that young people are focused in the final quarter of the programme on options beyond Give and Take. The young people engaged with the programme require focused support to assist them to progress and therefore it is important that Give and Take makes time that enables them to consider and apply for those options that appeal to them. It is critical that the Give and Take Scheme assist each young person to move into some other activity that will preoccupy them such as a job, training course or back into education. A positive move on will ensure the sustained impact of the benefits of the Give and Take Scheme and keep the young people positively engaged, thus reducing the potential risk of them lapsing into inactivity.

Evidence has shown that there is a need for flexibility on Give and Take with respect to the length of time that a young person stays with the programme. For those with a learning disability or essential skills difficulties it is concluded that one year may not be long enough. Give and Take has been flexible in this respect and in conjunction with the Social Worker and Gatekeeper the needs of each young person have been considered on a case by case basis. This approach needs to be sustained.

When young people are moving on from the programme it has been reported by Trust staff that there is a need for more formalised communication in respect to the exit strategy for the young person and to communicate what the young person has achieved during their time on the programme.



## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for consideration by Give and Take staff in the future development and enhancement of what is without doubt already a very successful programme.

- The Give and Take model is one that works and should be sustained
- The Give and Take programme currently works with a small segment of the overall NEET group (130 per annum out of a total 10,140 NI total!!). It could be argued that there are other segments of the NEET group which require support and assistance as much, if not more, than those young people from a care background (edge of care, homeless, addicts etc). Include Youth as an organisation needs to decide if they wish to expand their current client base and to provide a much larger programme (in terms of numbers) across Northern Ireland. There is a growing recognition within the market place that Give and Take works and should be opened up to other young people in need
- European Social Funding (ESF) secured in 2008 helped to develop the Give and Take programme, particularly in respect to the provision of essential skills (in-house) and developing a better employer focus through specialist employer facing functions / staff. Given the success of these interventions a further application to ESF should be made building upon the work already carried out and developing new approaches which are better suited to the current labour market. A few examples of what might be attempted include an Intermediate Labour Market approach (subsidised employment) or a self-employment / enterprise route
- The success of the model should be communicated widely to inform discussion and debate in respect to meeting the needs of NEET young people
- There is a need to enhance the sharing of information with those who currently refer and have the potential to refer young people to the scheme e.g. Trust staff (Gatekeepers, Social Workers, Employability workers) and DEL Careers Advisers. Give and Take staff should have face to face meetings with such people once a year to discuss and review progress and share experiences
- There is a need to review the health assessment process that is conducted during induction. Personal Development Workers should devise a new methodology for collecting health and wellbeing information
- Personal Development Workers believe that there are opportunities to improve the Getting Ahead programme and to concentrate on a smaller number of topic areas over a longer period. They also believe that there are opportunities to introduce more accredited programmes within the personal development programme. They should be supported to develop and enhance this element of the programme.
- Include Youth to establish a social enterprise training company which could market well developed products (e.g. Getting Ahead) to the wider external market place

- A review of participant files to inform the evaluation process highlighted that there is inconsistency in the information that is held on file for each participant. A checklist of information that needs to be retained should be developed and communicated to staff to ensure that all files have the necessary information available
- It would be useful if the monitoring information could provide details on;
  - Average length of time on the programme (e.g. less than 1 year, 12 months, 12 – 18 months, longer than 18 months)
  - Number of young people with 1 qualification, 2 qualifications, 3 etc.
- In the current economic climate, where jobs are difficult to find and work placement opportunities are also becoming difficult, Give and Take may wish to consider the inclusion of a self employment, business skills training / practical input. This would introduce young people to more entrepreneurial focused skills development
- There is a need to review some of the performance indicators for the programme
- There needs to be recognition that Give and Take is not an employment programme but an employability programme i.e. the success of the project should not be entirely reliant on employment outputs. Increasingly there is recognition that people furthest from the labour market require support to assist them along the employability continuum. Give and Take has demonstrated that it significantly enhances the motivation, confidence and essential skills of young people, moving them further along the employability path.
- The evaluation identifies Give and Take as a model of best practice in respect to interventions with young people from a care background. There are a number of European transnational initiatives which potentially could provide a platform for Include Youth to promote Give and Take, to develop new practices and to learn from other similar organisations across the EU



TAKE

[include]  
outta  
promoting best practice with young people at risk



TAKE

[include]  
outta  
promoting best practice with young people at risk



Include Youth  
Alpha House  
3 Rosemary Street  
Belfast  
BT1 1QA

Tel: 028 9031 1007  
Fax: 028 9024 4436



E-mail: [info@includeyouth.org](mailto:info@includeyouth.org)  
Website: [www.includeyouth.org](http://www.includeyouth.org)  
Inland Revenue Charity Reference No: XR25598  
Company No: NI 38084