



# ***Herts Get Set***

## **Final Project Report**

**October 2015**



# ***Herts Get Set*** Final Project Report

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## Introduction

In October 2014 Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) was awarded the Programme Development Funding (PDF) for Hertfordshire by Big Lottery. The aims of the PDF funding were to:

- Ensure widespread awareness of the European Social Fund (ESF) opportunities available in the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area through the opt in with the Big Lottery Fund
- Develop positive working relationships between organisations in the LEP area, which will lead to good quality applications to the Building Better Opportunities programme from 2015
- Provide a publicly advertised contact for local organisations to find out more and be a source of knowledge about the area, investment priorities and stakeholders.
- Support organisations in their area to develop their capacity to deliver ESF with a view to them leading applications or partnering with others to do so.

Big Lottery wanted a focus on supporting the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in order to ensure that organisations specialising in tackling social inclusion would be aware of and prepared for the launch of Building Better Opportunities (BBO).

Hertfordshire was one of 38 LEP areas receiving PDF grants. The Hertfordshire LEP had consulted with stakeholders and identified the key social inclusion priorities when they published their European Structural and Investment Funding (ESIF) Strategy in January 2014. These were:

- Addressing barriers to employment for adults with specific/multiple needs
- Early interventions for young people aged 16-24
- Financial Confidence

This PDF grant was the first time that specific funding had been provided to help potential ESF applicants get prepared. HCF welcomed the chance to help organisations in Hertfordshire make the most of this opportunity.

In order to maximise the reach and effectiveness of the project HCF worked with partners:

- A small steering group of core partners was set up to oversee the project delivery including – HCF, CVS Broxbourne & East Herts, Community Action Dacorum and North Herts CVS
- Support was also provided by a wider group of VCS member organisations to ensure we maximised reach. These were Watford & Three Rivers Trust, CVS St Albans, Welwyn Hatfield CVS and Herts Sports Partnership
- Norman Jennings from the Hertfordshire LEP and Jonathan Clarke from Big Lottery provided guidance throughout the project and attended/presented at the events
- The Community Wellbeing team at Hertfordshire County Council supported the project by promoting it internally and externally, providing venues and attending/presenting at the events raise awareness of their upcoming tender opportunities.
- Dacorum Borough Council, B3 Living, Watford FC Sports and Community Education Trust and Stevenage Borough Council also provided venues for events.



From left: Helen Mutio (CAD), Sarah Elliott (Project Manager – HCF), Jacque Hime (NHCVS), Michal Siewniak (Partnership Co-ordinator – CVS BEH)

# Building Awareness

## Project Launch

The project was initially announced at a VCSE event held at the Hertfordshire LEP in Welwyn Garden City. An audience of 90 people were given overviews about ESIF Funding, the Big Lottery's plans for match funding and an initial introduction to our plans for **Herts Get Set**.



November and December were spent setting up the project's services and in January 2015 we circulated details of the support available and invitations to the On Your Marks events to over 2,000 recipients via the collective networks of our partnership.



Services available for organisations included:

- Dedicated telephone number
- Project e-mail address
- Project web pages – see below

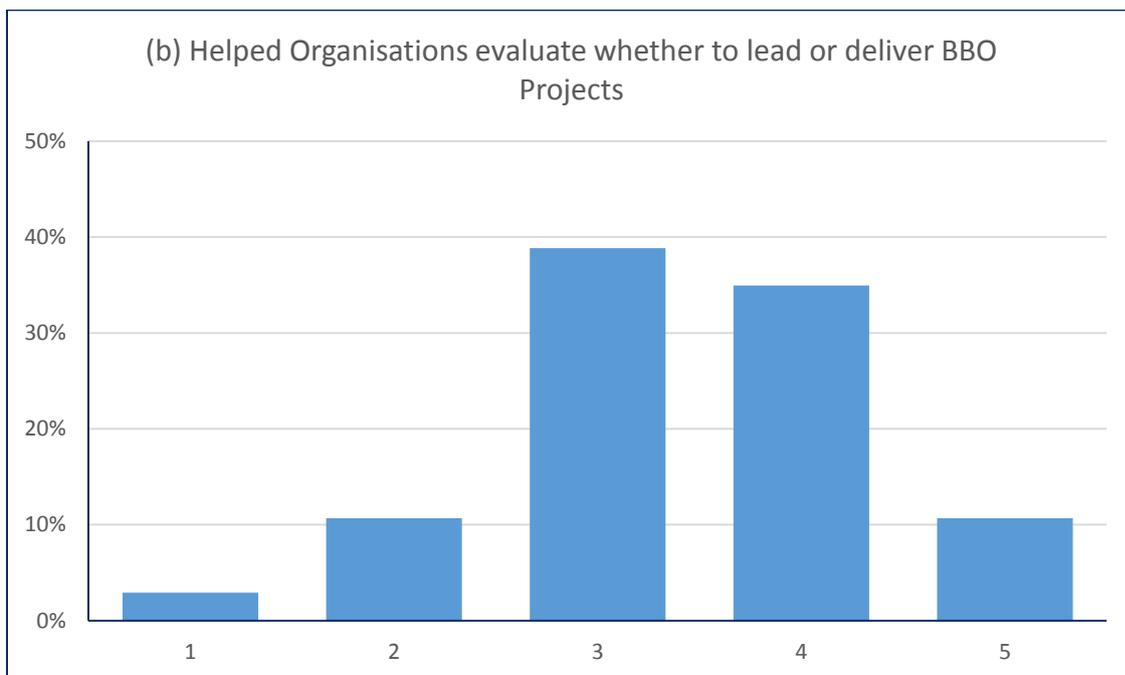
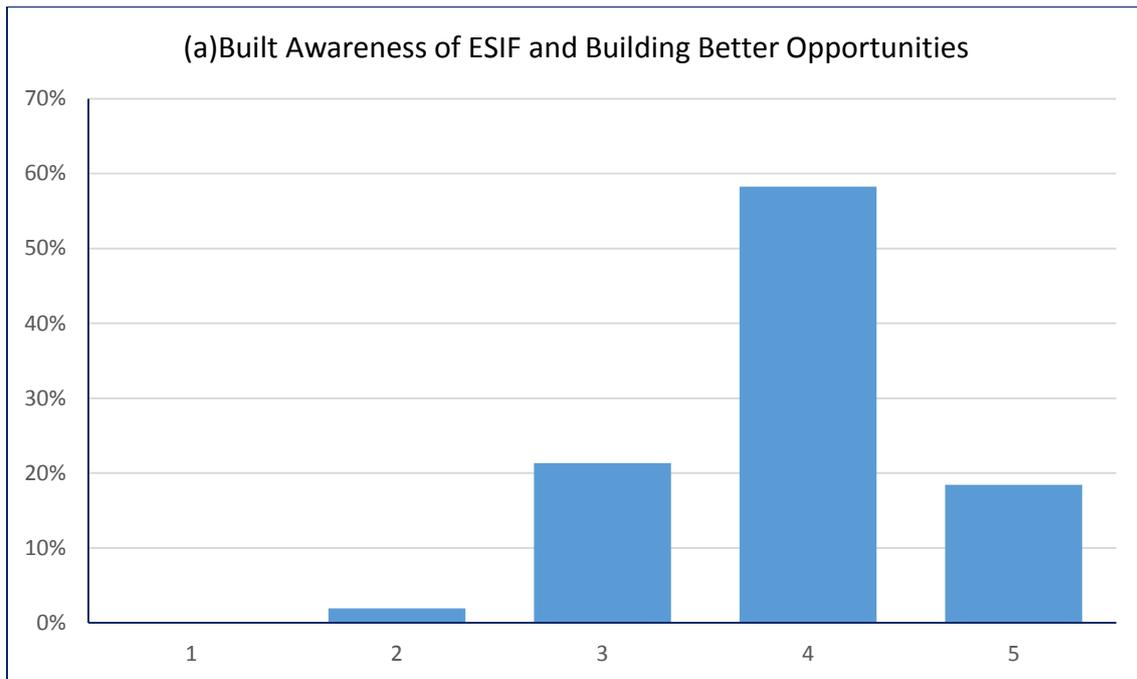
We held four On Your Marks events at a choice of different locations in the county. These events were targeted at the VCSE sector to maximise awareness.

Date	Location	Venue
24 <sup>th</sup> February am	Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum Borough Council
25 <sup>th</sup> February pm	Hoddesdon	B3 Living
2 <sup>nd</sup> March am	Watford	Meridian Centre
3 <sup>rd</sup> March pm	Stevenage	Business Technology Centre

The programme for each On Your Marks event included:

- Introduction to ESIF (LEP)
- Overview of the Building Better Opportunities programme (Big Lottery)
- **Herts Get Set**- support available and future plans
- HCC Community Wellbeing presentation
- Group discussions – to consult on the partnership building phase

A total of 176 people attended across the 4 dates. Attendees at each event were invited to evaluate whether it had met the declared aims:



The graphs above show the percentage of evaluation respondents (total 103) what felt the event had met its aims. 0 means didn't meet at all, and a score of 5 means met completely.

So in terms of building awareness, nearly 77% of respondents gave a score of 4 or 5. Responses were more mixed regarding whether the information presented enabled organisations to evaluate whether or not to lead or deliver projects. Just over 45% scored 4 or 5, with 39% effectively sitting on the fence scoring 3.

In their verbatim comments many said they found all the presentations useful, but a few thought there was a lot to take in.

*“European Funding is difficult to understand”*

*“Confused where T08 and T10 went and why the focus on T09”*

In the group discussions we asked for comments on the draft questionnaire circulated to collect and share partner information from interested organisations, and for their views and ideas on the format of the Partnership Development workshop.

Many thought the questionnaire should collect more detail than the proposed draft:

*“Need to highlight capacity and current provision”*

*“More information on the size of organisations”*

*“I hope the information is collected electronically”*

*“Need to be able to describe what we do”*

There were a number of ideas about the Partnership Development workshop:

*“Should identify potential leads and bring them together with potential partners”*

*“Speed matching – encourage face to face partner building”*

*“Half day is insufficient”*

*“Discussion around what HCC is looking for in terms of partnerships”*

*“Identify leads and get them to pitch”*

**Project web pages** – these were developed for the Hertfordshire Training & Development Consortium (HTDC) website and kept updated throughout the project:

The screenshot shows the HTDC website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home | Training For Your Workforce | Training Directory | HTDC - About Us | Contact Us |. Below this is a sidebar menu for 'HTDC - About Us' with links to Staff, Membership, HTDC Services & Activities (highlighted), HTDC Services, Current Projects, Herts Get Set, Past Projects, and Project & Tender Opportunities. The main content area features a 'Herts Get Set' section with text about funding from the Big Lottery Programme and European Social Fund. It includes logos for the Big Lottery and HTDC, and a 'LOTTERY FUNDED' badge. Below the text is a paragraph stating that the web pages will be updated during the project. At the bottom of the main content area is a grid of six buttons: Herts Get Set Events, Information for Applicants, European Structural & Investment Funding, Hertfordshire LFP - Local Funding Priorities, Big Lottery - Building Better Opportunities, and Partnership Development. On the left side of the main content area, there are three image-based buttons: COURSES AVAILABLE, CURRENT PROJECTS, and BECOME A MEMBER.

The Stakeholder Workshop was held on 10<sup>th</sup> February at the Hertfordshire Development Centre in Stevenage. We invited representatives from local authorities and other statutory agencies.

The programme included presentations about ESIF Funding, Building Better Opportunities and the Herts Get Set project. Hertfordshire County Council who hosted the event also introduced their voluntary sector strategy. Delegates then worked in groups to identify existing provision that links with the social inclusion priorities for Hertfordshire, and gaps in provision they are aware of.

This information was subsequently collated and made available to potential applicants.



# Partnership Development

## Partner Information Survey

Following the feedback at the On Your Marks events, we developed a Survey Monkey questionnaire to include all the elements suggested by participants. Here is a summary of the questions:

Q#	Question	Format/Options
1.	Name of Organisation	
2.	What sector is your organisation in?	VCS/Private/Public
3.	Name of main contact	
4.	Telephone number – work	
5.	Telephone number – mobile	
6.	E-mail address	
7.	Website address	
8.	What are the main aims and objectives of your organisation	Free text (600 chars)
9.	What is your interest in Building Better Opportunities	Lead/Delivery Partner/Both
10.	Which Hertfordshire Social Inclusion Priority Theme(s) are you interested in?	Young People/Barriers to Employment/Financial Confidence
11.	Young People (YP): Which client groups do you currently/potentially work with?	12 options/other
12.	YP: What activities can you deliver as part of a BBO project – current/potential	18 options/other
13.	YP: Which districts can you deliver activities in – premises; current; potential	11 options
14.	YP: Describe your relevant experience/track record	Free text (2,000 chars)
15.	Barriers to Employment (BE): Which client groups do you currently/potentially work with?	14 options/other
16.	BE: What activities can you deliver as part of a BBO project – current/potential	19 options/other
17.	BE: Which districts can you deliver activities in – premises; current; potential	11 options
18.	BE: Describe your relevant experience/track record	Free text (2,000 chars)
19.	Financial Confidence (FC): Which client groups do you currently/potentially work with?	5 options/other
20.	FC: What activities can you deliver as part of a BBO project – current/potential	7 options/other
21.	FC: Which districts can you deliver activities in – premises; current; potential	11 options
22.	FC: Describe your relevant experience/track record	Free text (2,000 chars)
23.	Details of your organisation's size/capacity	Staff/Income/Beneficiaries
24.	What is your experience of partnership working?	Free text (2,000 chars)

All those who had attended the On Your Marks events and anyone else on our database was e-mailed the link and invited to complete the survey. Our CVS partners also circulated to their members.

This was initially circulated on 11<sup>th</sup> March with a deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> March. It was made clear at the On Your Marks events and in the emails about the survey, that only those organisations who responded would be invited to the Partnership Development Workshop. A number of organisations found the survey quite challenging as we required all relevant sections to be completed, and some faced technical issues trying to go back in and edit their form. However all were given advice and support to give them the opportunity to complete their forms. On 26<sup>th</sup> March after the deadline, those with incomplete forms were given additional time until 31<sup>st</sup> March to complete them.

When reviewing the data, we also uncovered issues with relatively small/inexperienced organisations being too ambitious with what they were proposing to deliver. They were recommended to focus on their strengths. And despite clear guidance having been given at all our events about the fact that only large organisations being in a position to lead projects, we subsequently needed to ask all those wishing to be a lead to substantiate their credentials by declaring that they meet the following criteria:

1. Does your organisation\* currently have an annual income of £500,000 or more?  
Yes  No
2. Has your organisation\* successfully delivered contracts on a similar scale i.e. with a value in excess of £300,000 per annum?  
Yes  No
3. Does your organisation\* currently have project staff with the experience of managing delivery partnerships with 4+ partners?  
Yes  No
4. Does your organisation\* have a recognised quality standard (Matrix, IIP, PQASSO, ISO)?  
Yes  No

If “Yes”, please specify which standard:

5. Do you have the agreement of your organisation’s board to express interest in being a lead for a Building Better Opportunities project?  
Yes  No

*\*Can apply to a single organisation or over all members of a legally constituted consortium*

Only organisations that returned completed signed forms were displayed as leads when the Partner Information data was published.

The database including information submitted by 119 organisations was eventually published on the web pages on 20<sup>th</sup> April. Unfortunately the web development work was not completed in time so we had to provide all the data on an Excel spreadsheet. However, despite the technical issues we had many positive comments about the usefulness of the information to help find partners and leads.

Here is a summary of the information supplied by the participating organisations:

- 108 were VCS, 7 private sector, 4 public sector
- 18 were interested in being a project lead
- Interest in the 3 Hertfordshire BBO projects:
  - Young people – 75
  - Barriers to employment – 92
  - Financial Confidence – 44
- Size of organisations (annual income)
  - Under £300,000 – 61
  - £300k - £1m – 27
  - Over £1m – 32

### **Partnership Development Workshop**

The final Herts Get Set event was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at the Hertfordshire Development Centre in Stevenage. There were 104 attendees – all from organisations that had completed the Partner Information Survey (above).

In the morning there were presentations:

- Building Better Opportunities - Jonathan Clark, Big Lottery
- Case Study on the previous ESF programme – Simon Waldron, Learning Partnership Luton & Beds
- Herts Get Set – Sarah Elliott

These were followed by Leads Interviews conducted by Norman Jennings from the Hertfordshire LEP. Lead organisations participating were:

Community Action Dacorum, Mark Mitchell  
Groundwork Hertfordshire, Peter Christmas  
Hertfordshire CAB Network, Marion Seneschall  
Hertfordshire County Council, Juliet Whitehead  
Hertfordshire Independent Living Service, Sarah Wren  
Reed in Partnership, Zoe Mitchinson  
TCHC Opportunities for All, Dominic Wade  
Wenta, Jo Ransom

All had 8 minutes to answer the following questions:

1. Why do you want to be involved in Building Better Opportunities and which theme or themes are you interested in?
2. What is your organisation's experience of managing and delivering large projects?
3. Tell us about your approach to partnership working? We are particularly interested in how you deal with compliance and the support and capacity-building you offer to your sub-contractors.

4. What experience do you have of sub-contracting to the voluntary sector, and to small providers in particular?
5. What is your local knowledge of Hertfordshire and its social inclusion challenges?
6. What are your current thoughts about how many partners you wish to involve in your Building Better Opportunities application and what proportion of delivery will be delivered by your own organisation?
7. If you are leading a project of say £1m – what percentage would your organisation expect to budget for as your management fee?

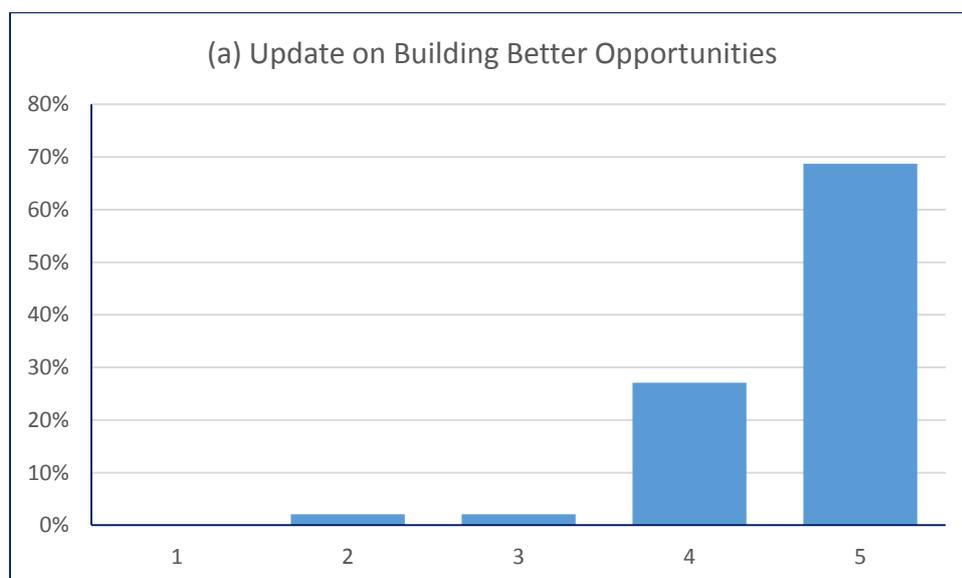
The audience were actively engaged in this part of the event – they were provided with response sheets to make notes of the leads' answers.

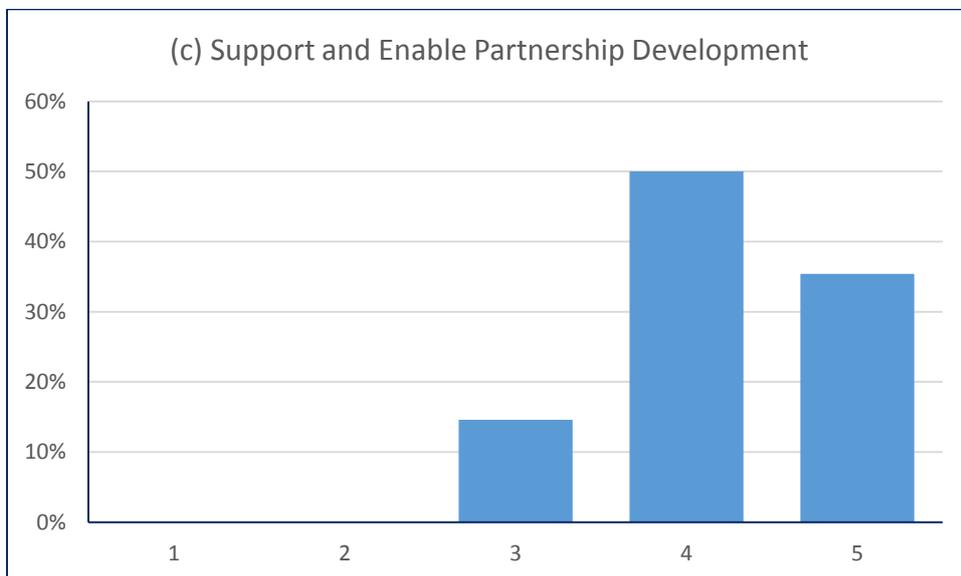
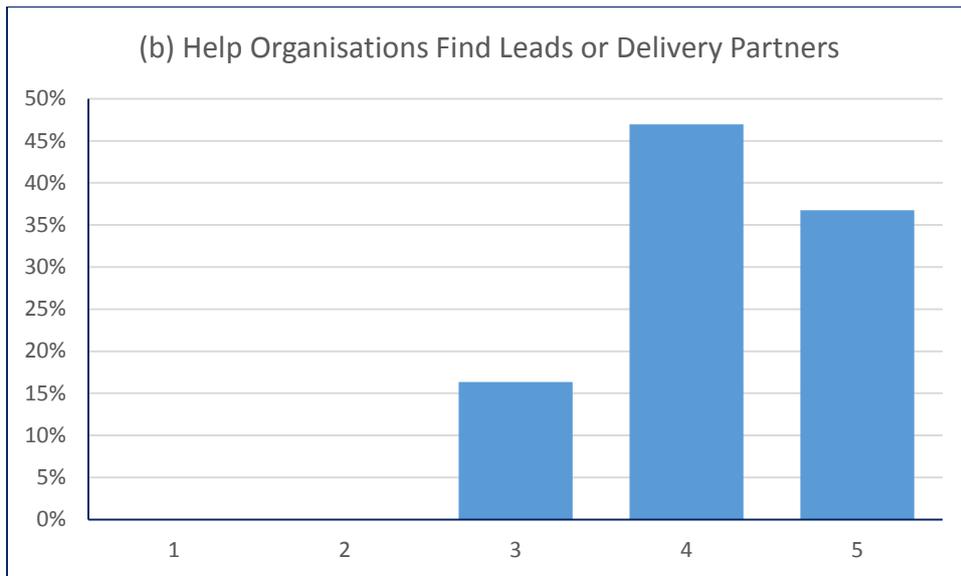
Following the event leads were asked to provide all their answers in writing and these were circulated to attendees.



In the afternoon there were 2 additional break-out rooms to allow a separate room for each BBO project. Leads were seated at tables and participants could book half hour slots in groups to meet the leads. The aim was to enable potential delivery partners to introduce themselves and it was also an opportunity for them to ask questions of the leads. Prior to the event all attendees were advised to bring with them information about their organisation and what they could bring to a BBO project.

Delegates were asked to evaluate the event - here are their scores as to whether it achieved the declared aims (0 = didn't meet at all; 5 = met completely):





Out of the 49 who completed the evaluations, the feedback was excellent

- Update on Building Better Opportunities – 96% scored 4 or 5
- Helped organisations find Leads or Delivery Partners – 84% scored 4 or 5
- Support and enable Partnership Development – 85% scored 4 or 5

*“Very useful, good ideas and productive for wider networking”*

*“Well organised, interesting, well thought out, varied. Liked format”*

*“Well thought out and met the need to gain understanding of potential partners”*

Delegates were asked how they would progress ideas from the day:

*“Send expression of interest to lead partners”*

*“I have already booked some meetings”*

*“Contact relevant leads - work with them to progress”*

*“Keep in contact with working partners, follow up funding lead”*

*“Discuss with colleagues how to proceed and with whom”*

## Capacity-Building

### Train the Trainer

Once the Partnership Development Workshop was completed, we found that the need for further support for organisations was very limited. We therefore considered other ways in which the Herts Get Set project could provide support in order to help prepare organisations for the new ESF programme.

Hertfordshire Community Foundation, as the lead for HTDC, had delivered a workforce development grant programme funded by Hertfordshire County Council. One of the applicants for this (ASCEND in South Oxhey) developed and piloted a new module for their employability programme via their grant. ASCEND had worked alongside a consultant from White Rose Training and Heather Donohoe, one of HTDC's trainers and advisors. The new course provided the means to analyse individuals' personality traits in order to help them identify possible roles and working environments to suit them. Heather Donohoe was commissioned to develop a train the trainer course that would enable other organisations to deliver the course. All the development partners had signed off any intellectual property rights, thus enabling HTDC to share the materials and methodology with other providers.

We initially set up 3 course dates and advertised to our Herts Get Set database and other partners. These filled up very quickly so we added more dates and eventually ran the course 7 times:

Date	Location	Attendees
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Hatfield	12
8 <sup>th</sup> July	Bedford*	12
15 <sup>th</sup> July	Uttlesford*	8
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Letchworth	10
18 <sup>th</sup> August	Hemel Hempstead	12
10 <sup>th</sup> September	Stanstead Abbots	12
22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Hemel Hempstead	9

*\*Funded by ESF Community Grants (TCHC)*

Overall 55 tutors from employability providers received the training via Herts Get Set funded courses, with a further 20 tutors receiving training outside Hertfordshire funded by ESF Community Grants.

The feedback via evaluations of the course were extremely positive, scoring the course very good or excellent on all criteria. Examples of some of the comments were:

*"Excellent to be able to use the resources to meet the needs of different types of learners"*

*"Really enjoyed the course and the teaching style was excellent"*

*"Very well designed, very useful, plus flexible - thank you"*

*"I will use this in a group setting with some of our longer-term unemployed service users. Some elements I will also use with 1:1 work"*

*"Well structured and very interesting - lots of useful information provided"*

## **Deaf Awareness**

This course was delivered as 2 half day sessions on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September in Hatfield. Given the importance of the Barriers to Employment theme in the Hertfordshire Building Better Opportunities programme it seemed logical to equip employability tutors with some skills and knowledge to work with deaf clients. The course was delivered by Jane Shann from the Phoenix Group for Deaf Children.

Day one focussed on deaf awareness, with day 2 providing basic sign language and enhanced communication skills.

Seven tutors (all from VCS organisations) attended the course – all evaluations marked the course as excellent. Comments included:

*“I will incorporate in communication skills training. Has given me the awareness of diversity of needs, plus therefore the need for different strategies”*

*The course was amazing - information very educational. Tutor excellent and patient. The two whole sessions have been extremely fulfilling/brilliant!”*

# Final Evaluation

## **Herts Get Set** Project

We undertook a final evaluation of the overall project via a brief Survey Monkey questionnaire that was circulated to our database initially on 13<sup>th</sup> August. By the deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> September a total of 47 responses had been received.

25% of the respondents said their organisation had participated in the previous ESF programme (7 out of the 12 had Community Grants); 68% had not had ESF funding before; the remainder didn't know.

When asked what difference Herts Get Set had made to their organisation:

- 87% agreed that it had made them aware of ESIF
- 94% felt fully informed about Building Better Opportunities
- 89% said the project had provided the opportunity to establish partnerships
- 85% said that it had helped VCS organisations be better prepared for Building Better Opportunities
- 79% said that it had helped them to develop their network of contacts for further collaboration

Comments included:

*"I have found the process a little repetitive due in part to the fact that I have tried to attend as many sessions/events as possible. I have overall however found the sessions/events useful and informative. I have also learned a lot about the tendering processes"*

*"I would like emphasise how beneficial it has been to be introduced to new organisations and to have the opportunity to promote the Employability work that we currently undertake"*

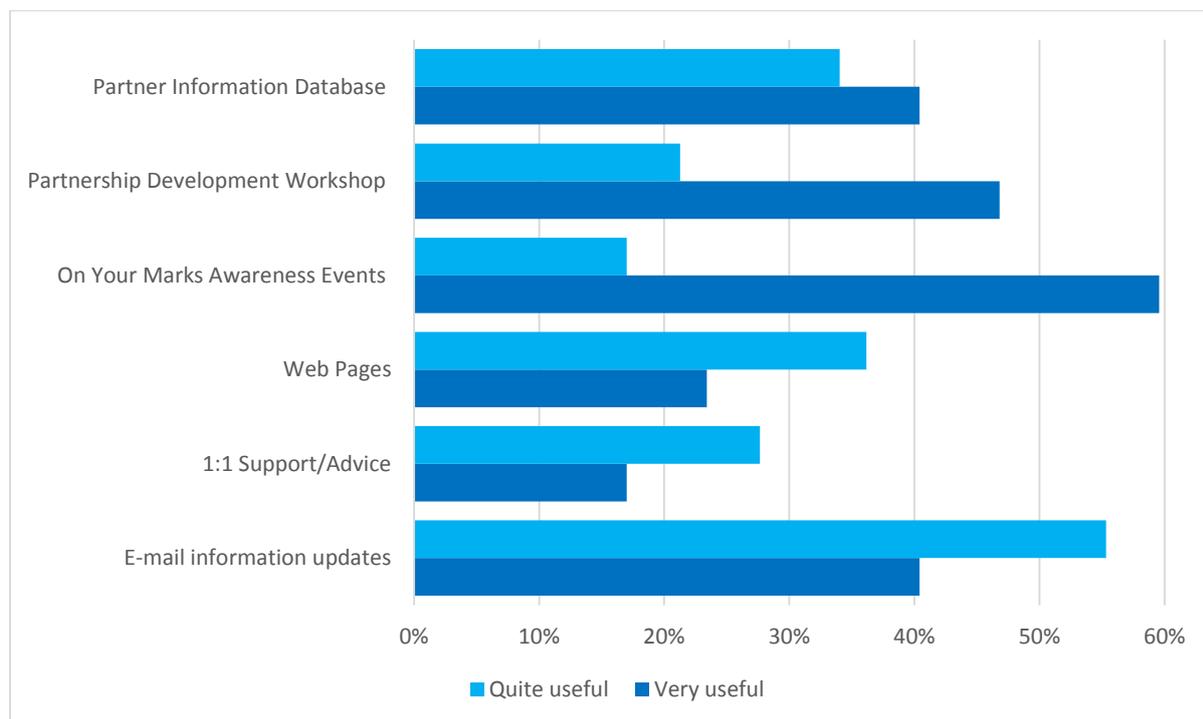
*"It has helped us have a better understanding of the wider voluntary sector network across Hertfordshire and make links that we otherwise may not have made"*

*"The main benefit for us was hearing directly from the funder about what they were looking for in terms of delivery, the application processes and the funding available. It was a great opportunity to meet other potential partners and collaborators"*

*"It helped us, as an organisation assess our readiness to become a partner"*

*"Links with the LEP for the voluntary sector - previously the LEP has been not visible or approachable for the sector There are very few other opportunities that provide a platform for smaller organisations to work with larger providers - this is important for a thriving voluntary sector"*

The following chart shows responses to the question – How Useful did you find the services provided by Herts Get Set?



Respondents thought the On Your Marks events and the Partnership Development workshop were very useful. The Partner Information Database and the E-mail updates also scored highly. The web pages and the 1:1 support were thought to have been less useful.

Positive comments included:

*“I was most impressed with the workshop events I attended. The structure was well thought out, and they enabled us, as a very small charity, to get involved in funding bids that we would normally have passed on as too large and demanding for us.”*

*“I feel the awareness raising of Herts Get Set was more than adequate for any organisation that was serious about delivering as part of such a large scale project.”*

*“I think Herts Get Set made as many people as possible aware of this funding but there will always be people who say ‘I did not know’.”*

Areas of concern, or ideas for improvement were:

*“To be in the best place, we’d ideally have been developing our partnerships long in advance - by at least a year. Therefore, beginning awareness events months beforehand isn’t really enough notice.”*

*“We are not bidding as a lead but as a possible partner. Perhaps there could have been a bit more explanation as to what this would actually mean.”*

*“I think that the timescales were very tight and the lack of information during some stages of the programme was not helpful but I understand that was beyond the control of the Get Set project.”*

A conclusion:

*“... there is such a diversity within the VCS that it is impossible to be all things to all groups/organisations.”*

## **Building Better Opportunities**

When asked about their opinion of the Building Better Opportunities programme in Hertfordshire (percentages represent agree strongly and slightly agree):

- 75% agreed that it was tackling Hertfordshire’s social inclusion priorities
- 57% agreed that it would maximise involvement of the VCS
- 66% thought the partnership model would work effectively
- 60% agreed that Big Lottery would be supportive as a managing agent
- 62% thought that the ESF reporting will be onerous
- 55% agreed that it was a good opportunity for small providers
- 57% agreed that it would encourage innovative approaches

Given that most respondents had been through the application process prior to completing the survey, many of the comments associated with this questions were negative or sceptical about the BBO programme:

*“If county win the bid/s (as I understand it they have bid for all three) there will be little or no local involvement and they will stick with the organisations they already contract plus the delivery team they have recruited, en mass”*

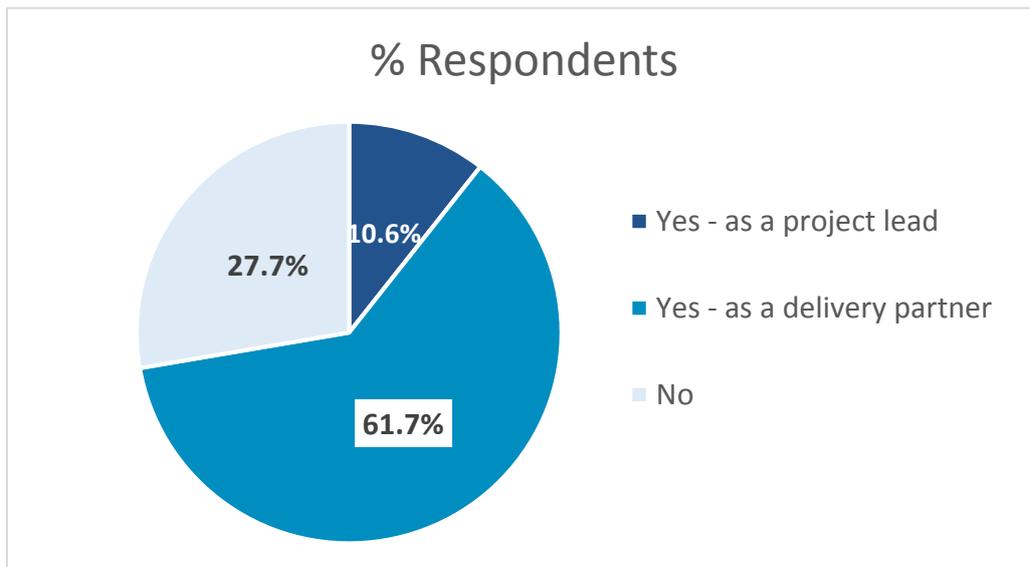
*“I fear the structure (larger grants only) will simply push costs "down the line" to providers and may exclude smaller/VCS providers.”*

*“Why does every project have to be innovative? There are lots of highly successful models running that could be scaled up, rather than necessarily creating a brand new project.”*

*“The principle of encouraging VCS involvement is sound and vital in genuinely reaching project participants with the most significant barriers to employment. However, the application process and structure of the project still lends a significant advantage to large, private or public sector organisations which have teams of people that can be freed up to provide capacity during application, development, and delivery stages.”*

*“I think it is too early to say whether or not the voluntary sector will be involved - it will depend hugely on who is awarded the contracts. Some of the applicants are not voluntary sector and so may not engage with small providers or encourage innovative approaches”*

Respondents were asked if they were involved in BBO applications:



The following reasons were given for not being involved in an application:

Reason(s)	Number
Not relevant for my organisation's current activities	3
No capacity to be involved in partnership application	5
Concern about the possible risks	3
Could not find suitable partners	4
Worried about the amount of monitoring	1

Following the collation of the survey responses, the Partnership Co-ordinator conducted follow-up interviews with a sample of respondents who had given permission for this. It was an opportunity to probe in more depth, and we have developed case studies to help understand the impact of the project on specific organisations that participated.

## ***Herts Get Set* Case Study: Three Rivers CAB**



Operates 3 Citizens Advice Bureaux in the Three Rivers District Council area, all of which provide generalist advice through a drop-in, telephone and email service.

The organisation has extensive experience of delivering money management training and debt advice.

Marian Seneschall, Chief Executive participated in the leads interviews at our Partnership Development Workshop.



### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

Three Rivers CAB has never participated in a similar exercise before even though as an organisation we are quite familiar with bid writing. We found the whole Herts Get Project very useful and informative. The project provided a great networking opportunity and enabled us to work and meet with new organisations to establish new partnerships. The process has helped (particularly the Partnership Development workshop in Stevenage) to formulate our bid. It helped us to introduce ESF funding and the Building Better Opportunities programme to my colleagues in other Hertfordshire CAB's. It was particularly good timing for two of the other managers who have been recently recruited. Dan Marshall from Stevenage CAB thought the event on 23<sup>rd</sup> April was a wonderful occasion.

### **Do you have any comments about the Herts Get Set project?**

We were pleased with the services provided by the project. The project web pages on the HTDC site were useful. All the events – On Your Marks and the Partnership Development workshop were well structured and well run. At the Partnership event in Stevenage, the afternoon session was particularly important for the CAB as it really helped us to meet and listen to potential partners so we could shape our funding application.

### **How could Herts Get Set have been improved?**

Whilst overall it worked well for us, I do have a suggestion for improving the project. At the Partnership Development Workshop in Stevenage – I think it would have been better if all the leads could have listened to each other's pitches.

## ***Herts Get Set*** Case Study: Circle Housing South Anglia



Circle Housing South Anglia owns 7,350 homes across 26 local authorities in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Essex.

The organisation provides a range of services for their residents to help improve their life chances.

Jacqui Brown, Community Development Co-ordinator



### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

I attended most of the meetings and events on behalf of Circle Housing South Anglia. I found the process very helpful.

The On Your Marks Event in Hoddesdon and the Partnership Development workshop provided me with good networking opportunities and I met many new potential partners.

The information on the website was easy to find and understand. I found the partner information that organisations provided particularly helpful. It enabled us to find out about other organisations in the county offering employability services.

Whilst some of my colleagues have knowledge and experience of ESF – for me this was completely new. So the project provided a very good learning opportunity – which is really important for my role as we have applied to be a delivery partner for Building Better Opportunities.

## ***Herts Get Set* Case Study: Excite-ed CIC**



Provide a range of safe, digital education opportunities for children and young people

Julia Bateson – Managing Director



### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

Excite-ed entered the process knowing nothing about ESF funding. I found the Herts Get Set project useful and positive. All the Herts Get Set events were well organised and well resourced. We initially learned about the ESF opportunities through the LEP website, and attended the first Herts Get Set meeting in WGC – this was particularly interesting and opened my eyes to the possible opportunities. I was really impressed with the “calibre” of speakers and I thought the whole process was transparent.

### **How could Herts Get Set have be improved?**

For me, with my experience there was a lack of emphasis on information and technology. The potential link between the use of social media and one of the ESF sub – themes (removing barriers to employment) is something which has not been properly addressed. I feel passionately that Excite-ed’s core digital education activities provide a root to employment.

### **What is your opinion about Building Better Opportunities?**

I am worried that if the contracts are not given to the VCS organisations, the process may be perceived as not successful. I also think that bigger corporations may cut off the smaller partners. Some of the bid winners may not have experience in partnership working with the VCS. Hence it is difficult to predict whether the lead/delivery partner model will work effectively.

## ***Herts Get Set* Case Study: Groundwork East**



Groundwork East is an environmental and community charity (established 1985 as Groundwork Hertfordshire) that works alongside communities to transform places and lives. Our three aims are creating better places, improving people's prospects, and promoting greener living and working.

Peter Christmas, Development Manager, participated in the leads interviews at the Partnership Development Workshop



### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

Groundwork found the project very useful. It gave us a very good level of resources and information. I attended the initial event at the LEP in November, the On Your Marks event in Hoddesdon and the final Partnership Workshop in Stevenage. Obviously there was an element of repetition in the Big Lottery and LEP presentations, but it also helped to reinforce the key information and messages. The application process, led by the Big Lottery Fund was clear, transparent and well explained.

### **How useful did you find the Herts Get Set project?**

Groundwork entered the process quite well prepared with experience and skills in bid writing. Peter said that all events he attended were very well organised and informative. He particularly highlighted the Partnership Development event in Stevenage which was very important to his organisation. At this stage Groundwork already knew that they would like to lead one of the bids. It made the whole process of identifying delivery partners a lot easier. The afternoon session was particularly important as it enabled the organisation to talk to many local providers and shape the funding application. The event has helped to pull their partnership together. Without the Herts Get Set events, the process would have been a lot more demanding and time consuming. As a result of the project, Groundwork submitted a funding application for Hertfordshire which included 20 delivery partners.

### **What is your opinion about Building Better Opportunities?**

I agree in principal with the Hertfordshire key social inclusion priorities. I also think that the lead / delivery partner model should work in practice. I can't comment at the moment on whether the process will maximise the involvement of the voluntary and community sector – it will depend on which partnerships win and who they have on board.

## ***Herts Get Set* Case Study: Prince's Trust**



Supports 13 to 30 year olds who are unemployed and those struggling at school and at risk of exclusion.

Our programmes give young people the practical and financial support they need to stabilise their lives. We help develop key skills, confidence and motivation, enabling young people to move into work, education or training.

Andrew Cawthorpe, Head of Public Sector Partnerships, Central Region



### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

The Prince's Trust found the Herts Get Set project useful and productive. The process was well communicated and it provided a very good networking opportunity. It has helped to establish new partnerships as well as cement the existing ones.

### **What is your opinion about Building Better Opportunities?**

The whole process has been exciting. However I think both smaller and larger providers face some challenges. Smaller organisations may be swamped by bigger agencies. Due to capacity and often limited resources, smaller organisations may have struggled to take the full advantage of the opportunity to be involved.

I also feel that although the partnership model is a good idea, it may in practice be difficult to implement and deliver. Working with say 20 organisations (small, large, county wide or district based) is likely to be challenging for the lead provider especially where they have no existing relationship with them. This may deter lead partners or where they do proceed, place additional pressures on administration.

## ***Herts Get Set*** Case Study:

### **Volunteer Centre Broxbourne & East Herts**



Provides information, advice and support about volunteering and training for Broxbourne & East Herts. Runs training courses to help individuals build confidence with a view to finding volunteering roles and seeking employment.

Loretta Borg, Director



#### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

I have found the Herts Get Set events very useful and very informative. Each event helped me to better understand the different ESIF programmes and how the various match-funders like Big Lottery, SFA and DWP partnerships work. The events that I attended highlighted the importance of effective partnership working.

#### **How useful were the services provided by Herts Get Set?**

The database, website and the events were all helpful. The variety of tools to support the process were very important as we all have different ways of learning.

#### **What is your opinion about Building Better Opportunities?**

Until we know who the contracts have been awarded to, it is hard to respond to this question. Each lead may have different ways of working and may look slightly differently at the project delivery. There is a lot of dissatisfaction in the VCS sector as smaller organisations are often left out and have little influence on contract arrangements. For example the National Careers Service prime contractor in Suffolk had 43 subcontractors in the East of England. When the Prime contract holder changed, this reduced to only 3 of the existing subcontractors continuing to be contracted despite many years of extremely successful delivery. Larger organisations often have a big advantage - more capacity, resources and professional bid writers – however, this does not always equate to excellent service delivery.

## ***Herts Get Set*** Case Study:

### **Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust**



Making a Positive Difference For All Through Sport & Learning. We do this by working across five key themes that underpin all of the Trust's various projects; Sports Participation, Education, Health, Social Inclusion and Community Facilities.

Mark Smith, Head of Education and Health



#### **What difference has Herts Get Set made to your organisation?**

We found the Herts Get Set project very useful and informative. The On Your Mark events were very well organised and offered a great opportunity to find out more about the ESF funding. I particularly enjoyed the presentation which explained the process but also created awareness around the complexity of the European funding. It is also worth mentioning that the events set the scene for the Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust which then helped to decide upon our future involvement in the process. Finally, the presentations as well as speakers explained the expected partnership model and the responsibilities of lead agencies and delivery partners within the Building Better Opportunities Programme.

#### **How useful were the services provided by Herts Get Set?**

I thought the Partnership Development Workshop was an event well worth attending. The interview part was well organised and 10 minutes slots worked very well. This event in Stevenage helped us to establish new working relationships. We have held additional meetings with some agencies and this collaboration will continue when the Herts Get Set project is officially completed.

#### **What is your opinion about Building Better Opportunities?**

I agree with the Hertfordshire key social inclusion priorities. The process has been clear and transparent but we are mindful that, given the number of delivery partners that the lead bidders have secured, that we may not all be able to be given a share of the delivery that is economically viable for a small charity. I believe that Building Better Opportunities could provide a positive opportunity for smaller providers to use their unique expertise in a specialist field to support those identified as benefiting from this initiative.