

Mainstreaming in Practice

What is Equal?

The Equal Programme is a European Social Fund (ESF) initiative which operates across all of the European Union. The Programme aims to develop and test new ways of challenging discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work.

Equal has acted as a learning platform, developing innovative ways of tackling existing labour market problems. It has presented evidence based outcomes which could be adopted by policy makers and delivery agents at local, regional, national and European levels.

The partnership approach in Equal is based around a model of Development Partnerships (DPs), consisting of organisations with common interests and different expertise, working collaboratively to deliver shared aims and objectives.

www.equal.ecotec.co.uk

www.equal-works.com

www.esf.gov.uk



Mainstreaming can be defined as the 'transfer and embedding of good practice' and it has been a leading principle of Equal. It can be both a complex and challenging ambition. Many Development Partnerships in Great Britain have achieved excellent outcomes that will live on after Equal.

Key Messages

- It is important to be flexible when looking to mainstream and disseminate work. At the start the OWEN DP had intended to target Jobcentre Plus, however as the DP evolved it had more success in mainstreaming at regional level with the Yorkshire Forward RDA
- Evidence!!! Providers need to provide evidence when promoting good practice. This might not necessarily be a formal research project but it is important to gather evidence along the way about what worked and how. Funders are interested in looking at the cost benefit analysis of what worked
- It is vital to know how projects fit with local, regional and national policy agendas
- Potential for mainstreaming must be integrated into project design and implementation from day one - not tagged on at the end. An effective approach is to have a dedicated post to lead on this activity
- Mainstreaming can only work if there is a clear, visible benefit. There must be a demand for the product. It is important to have someone with drive, vision and leadership skills

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