

**EQUAL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMME**  
Department for Education and Employment (European Social Fund Unit)

THEMATIC FIELDS & EC FEEDBACK ON NAP	LMA, POLICY FOCUS & ANALYSIS	GB ACTIVITIES WHICH EQUAL SUPPORT
<b>Pillar 1: Employability</b>		
<p><b>Theme A: Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all</b></p> <p>In the UK, inflows into long-term unemployment of both the young and adults (17% and 11% respectively) still exceed those of the best performing Member States. Much of the long-term unemployment is increasingly concentrated amongst disadvantaged groups (lone parents, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities) and particularly within a number of deprived communities, presenting associated problems of social exclusion.</p> <p>JER 2000 - low basic skills</p>	<p>GB to participate in both themes to maximise transnational networking. Theme A will also target race. Funding under this pillar will target the most deprived areas, in line with the national social inclusion strategies.</p> <p>Unfair discrimination identified as a major barrier for many target groups. Percentages saying that they've suffered discrimination:</p> <p>19% of ethnic minorities 16% of disabled people 20% of older workers</p> <p>Higher levels of unemployment and inactivity across all the target groups (except for women without dependants), although figures are not homogenous between or within target groups.</p> <p>Disabled people account for nearly a fifth of the GB working-age population but for only one eighth of all in employment.</p> <p>Only 67% of people in GB and 59% in Scotland and Wales aged 50 to state pension age are in employment compared to 75% of all working age.</p> <p>The Jobs PAT report has identified that opportunities in the labour market are unequal, with high levels of joblessness in some wards.</p> <p>Disadvantage exists within as well as between target groups.</p>	<p><b>Aim: to combat discrimination faced by individuals and promote equality in the workplace through the following activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Pilot ways to help employers understand the economic and social arguments for equality in the workplace and to provide employers with practical support to develop and implement effective equality policies.</li> <li>✍ Test ways of working with employers on the redesign of work/workplace to facilitate retention, integration or re-integration of disabled people and others who find it difficult to enter or re-enter the workforce.</li> <li>✍ Pilot positive action measures to target specific groups where there is access/under representation difficulties.</li> <li>✍ Test ways of linking deprived communities to nearby job growth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Aim: to test support mechanisms to help target groups integrate/ re-integrate into the labour market through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Piloting ways of improving dependent care (disabled and elderly relatives) and reconciliation of home and work responsibilities</li> <li>✍ Testing of mechanisms for providing financial support and advice to make the transition back</li> </ul>

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	<p>Women may find difficulty in :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ entering/remaining/returning in the labour market for women with family commitments.</li> <li>✍ Different patterns of working among men and women.</li> <li>✍ Low skills levels, particularly for certain groups of women (older women, certain ethnic minorities e.g. Bangladeshi)</li> </ul> <p>ii). Lack of support mechanisms: specific barriers identified in relation to integration/re-integration into the labour market include:</p> <p>Need for provision of care for dependants: disabled or elderly relatives.</p> <p>EQUAL will address gaps in current infrastructure and provision. It will not</p> <p>focus additional support on childcare as this is covered extensively in ESF Objective 3</p> <p>Need for financial support and advice (older workers, refugees)</p> <p>Need for mentoring support/support networks (older workers, refugees, drugs misusers).</p> <p>Lower levels of basic skills identified as a barrier for several target groups (older workers, certain groups within ethnic minorities). Refugees require English language skills to enter GB labour market</p>	<p>into the labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Developing and targeting basic skills provision to reach those unable to access current provision.</li> <li>✍ Developing mentoring schemes to address access, skill development, job retention and development and harassment.</li> <li>✍ Piloting ways of maintaining the labour market participation and progression of women with higher skills (particularly science, engineering and technology).</li> <li>✍ Developing language skills provision to enable refugees including those with high skill levels enter the labour market.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme B: Opportunities to promote potential for ethnic minorities within the world of work.</b></p> <p>The UK has a particularly high unemployment rate</p>	<p>EOC keen to pilot innovative long term approaches where u/e is high and traditional industries declining.</p>	<p><b>Aim: to improve the employment prospects for ethnic minorities.</b></p>

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<p>among people from ethnic minorities. To curb this, EQUAL partnerships should develop actions in line with the works of the Commission for Racial Equality, which seeks to improve business understanding of legal obligations and to illustrate the benefits of a more ethnically diverse workforce, and with the Social Exclusion Unit's strategy for neighbourhood renewal. EQUAL activities in this field will also be complementary to the Commission anti-discrimination package, which bans discrimination on a racial or ethnic basis</p>	<p>Need to continue strong contribution from the Commission for Racial Equality.</p> <p>Evidence for discrimination:</p> <p>Ethnic minority claimants, although better qualified than white claimants, have a median length of unemployment twice that for whites</p> <p>Tests show that 1/3 of white people are likely to show discriminatory behaviour in recruitment</p> <p>EQUAL will build on the existing work to develop demand-led employer focused strategies designed to open up new opportunities in higher skill/higher paying jobs for ethnic minorities.</p>	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Promoting the use of positive action where ethnic minority groups are under-represented</li> <li>✍ Developing innovative solutions to improve the outcomes for ethnic minorities on government employment and training programmes</li> <li>✍ Piloting ways of promoting the business case for a diverse workforce</li> <li>✍ Improving employers awareness and perceptions of qualifications from outside GB and develop ways of demonstrating the benefits of ethnic minority languages to employers, particularly SMEs.</li> <li>✍ Developing demand-led initiatives which get ethnic minorities into higher skills/paying jobs</li> </ul>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Pillar 2 Entrepreneurship</h3>		
<p><b>Theme C : Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas.</b></p> <p>The UK is one of the best performers in terms of employment in the service sector. However, EQUAL could build on the work of local agencies, which is key to stimulating enterprise and social inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ recognition that existing mainstream, support services are not very equipped to help support enterprise as a route from exclusion</li> <li>✍ recognition of self-employment as a route from welfare to work</li> <li>✍ can be an effective route out of unemployment and exclusion</li> <li>✍ can mean high cash gain for local economy</li> <li>✍ women less likely than men to enter self-employment. Women make up 51% of population, but only create around a third of</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aim: to test approaches to ensure that mainstream business support is developed to meet the needs of excluded groups.</b></p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ improving access to financial support,</li> <li>✍ improving business professional skills (finance, marketing business planning) in order to improve entrepreneurship development and success rate and</li> <li>✍ tailoring provision to needs to particular groups (women/older/ethnic minorities/disabled)</li> </ul>

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	<p>new businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Large variations between different ethnic groups eg 15% of Asian workers are self-employed but only 7% of African Caribbeans are.</li> <li>✍ Asian high concentration in retailing</li> <li>✍ significant variations in the levels of self-employment. May want regional targeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Mainstreaming:</b> to work with the DTI and Small Business Service to develop good practice which builds on the recommendations from the SEU Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy i.e. to encourage enterprise and business growth in disadvantaged communities and groups under-represented in terms of business ownership. Will also build on existing British Bankers Association research into improving access to business support services and finance opportunities for ethnic minority groups.</p>	<p>people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ including mentoring from existing businesses.</li> <li>✍ promoting enterprise in disadvantaged areas</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme D: Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs.)</b></p> <p>The Lisbon conclusions call for an increase in employment in services, including personal services, where there are major shortages; Member States should work out appropriate solutions for the least favoured categories.</p> <p>As shown by the project 'Social Firms UK', the third sectors has expanded in the last decade in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Govt recognition that the social economy can play an important role in development of communities, economic growth and social gain</li> <li>✍ recognition that the social economy may offer a route to those who find it difficult to access employment ( e.g. Social Firms, community businesses)</li> <li>✍ constructive use of social economy eg targeted ILMs to deliver local authority services, or to enable tenants on estates to bid to deliver estate services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aim: to develop a common understanding of the way in which the Social economy can encourage labour market integration</b></p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ clarifying the varied objectives of current social economy activity in UK and other Member States</li> <li>✍ developing and test appropriate mechanisms to respond to a specified need</li> <li>✍ helping develop infrastructure to support those</li> </ul>

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<p>the UK but, in comparison to other EU countries like Germany or Italy, a further increase in the number of social firms or enterprises can be anticipated. There are still difficulties linked to the lack of access to funding and to benefits disincentives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ wide range of grass roots experience, and different ways of working. However - need to clarify the role and value of the social economy.</li> <li>✍ Strong opportunity to learn from other Member States.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mainstreaming</b> : clarify the role of the social economy, with the intention of developing and disseminating good practice (eg enhance SBS/British Bankers Association and Social Enterprise London website on social enterprise for business support and bank staff).and viable models which can be taken forward within mainstream ESF and central Government funded activity.</p> <p>Contribute to Policy Action Team 3 findings on need to promote social enterprises as a viable economic option.</p> <p>Build on ADAPT UK social firm work and work with the small business service to produce viable models which can be mainstreamed.</p>	<p>involved it the social economy at local and national level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ developing management and business skills within the social economy</li> </ul>
<h3>Pillar 3: Adaptability</h3>		
<p><b>Theme E : Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market</b></p> <p>The Lisbon conclusions suggest a higher priority for lifelong learning inter alia by encouraging</p>	<p>GB to participate in both themes -</p> <p>essential that overall strategy develops the role of employers</p> <p>UK has particular challenges in area of basic skills and the EU has major challenge in area of information technology, where it wants to reach the Lisbon target of becoming a world leader.</p>	<p><b>Aim to test innovative approaches to attract non-traditional learners to improve their basic and new skills</b></p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ piloting ways of improving access to basic skills in the workplace, eg positive action and mentoring</li> </ul>

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<p>agreements between the social partners and enhanced complementarity between lifelong learning and adaptability (working time flexibility etc)</p> <p>The UK encourages lifelong learning to address low levels of basic skills. Ambitious national targets have been set. EQUAL should build on the ADAPT contribution to the Ufl concept and should help those most in need by widening access to learning.</p> <p>The JER recommendation on the 2000 NAP recognises the closer relationship between the Government and the Social Partners. Social partners have an important role to play in promoting workplace learning to help address the UK's persistently low level of labour productivity (UK output gap of 36% compared with the US and 25% compared with France). New types of partnerships could be experimented within EQUAL</p>	<p>Psychological barriers are identified as a problem for many target groups, many of whom are alienated by their experience of traditional education (missed out when children and are now also less likely to participate in mainstream provision)</p> <p>Part-time workers are less likely to receive in-work training. Part-time workers are more likely to be women, those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Tailored approach required for older workers</p> <p>How best to enable intermediary organisations to play an effective role in basic skills development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ innovative approach to enable social partners to develop workplace learning</li> <li>✍ innovative approaches to encourage community based learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme F: Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies</b></p> <p>Despite the UK labour market being extremely diverse there are signs of skills gaps in certain sectors, particularly IT. Special emphasis should be put on IT skills. EQUAL will capitalise on the experience of ADAPT projects and in particular the lessons drawn from the transnational week event in March, which explored changing work practices in the context of the emerging information society.</p>	<p>The GB labour market is diverse in terms of the working arrangements it supports. 25% of GB employees work part-time while EU average is 16%.</p> <p>1998 Workplace Employment Relations survey found that small businesses less likely to have formal flexible working practices in place while research shows that flexible practices are cost effective .60% managers in workplaces with 25 or more offered flexible practices.</p> <p>Increasing demand from employees for flexibility - important that EQUAL helps employers to develop</p>	<p><b>Aim to promote inclusive working practices and adaptability including:</b></p> <p><b>work/life balance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Development schemes &amp; toolkits to persuade &amp; help employers , particularly SMEs &amp; employees adopt work/life balance [Focus- those areas not yet well covered such as changing the long hours culture, parental leave, value of volunteering]</li> <li>✍ Use of technologies in work to support recruitment and/or job retention of older people with health issues, disabled people, people</li> </ul>

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JER 2000 - IT skills gap (Action Plan 2000)	<p>knowledge of best practice in flexible working patterns and benefits to both employer and employee.</p> <p>Workers in the UK are more likely to work long hours than anywhere else in the EU, but UK output per head is below the G7 average and the costs of stress to the UK economy have been estimated at around £7 billion.</p> <p>Only small numbers of employees in the UK have access to non-standard working patterns (e.g. only 10% have access to flexitime)</p> <p>Lack of flexible working opportunities is a barrier to equal opportunities.</p> <p>Social partners - fundamental - EQUAL can help SMEs to recognise the benefit of a partnership approach to develop the productivity of their workforce.</p> <p>DTI are carrying out a review of parental leave which will inform UK activity. EQUAL may help test models and research barriers which could then inform policy.</p>	<p>with caring responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Flexible/progressive retirement good practice to retain key skills</li> </ul> <p><b>use of ICT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ support IT skills as set out in DTI strategy, and equivalent strategies in Wales and Scotland, but seek to support inclusive workplace development</li> <li>✍ the ITEC skills strategy aims to make the UK the number one country for the supply of specialist IT, electronics and communications skills.</li> <li>✍ need to ensure that those with lower skill levels build IT skills</li> <li>✍ pilot ways of improving access to skills in the workplace and elsewhere, eg more imaginative and effective use of ICT</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar 4: Equal Opportunities for women and men</b>		
<p><b>Theme G: Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market , by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services.</b></p> <p>The Lisbon Summit has considered that all aspects of equal opportunities should be</p>	<p>Actions related to Work/life balance have been included in the Adaptability pillar. Any issues related to access to employment should be covered by the Employability.</p> <p>Given the strong focus given to the National Childcare Strategy in the domestic agenda and proportion of ESF Objective 3 which has been</p>	<p><b>No activity under theme G</b></p>

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<p>addressed, in particular by setting a new benchmark for improved childcare provision</p> <p>In GB Objective 1,2,3 will address a number of equal opportunities issues. EQUAL will concentrate on tackling job segregation.</p>	<p>allocated to this - it will not be covered through EQUAL.</p> <p>Although the gender pay gap has narrowed there is scope to address this through job desegregation.</p> <p>EQUAL will build on education, skills and labour market participation policy action GB taking to tackle pay gap. The focus on job-desegregation build on the evaluation of the ESF Objective 3 programme which identified that the training was re-inforcing rather than challenging existing stereotyping. Clearly an area which would benefit from additional innovative work.</p> <p>EQUAL to add value to new Connexions service national standard to ensure careers choices are free from stereotyping</p>	
<p><b>Theme H: Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation</b></p> <p>Progress has been made on narrowing the gender pay gap in GB. Addressing job segregation will help to reduce the pay gap further.</p> <p>The JER of the UK 2000 NAP suggests the need to tackle gender stereotyping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Women are under-represented in higher-level jobs: only 33% of managers/administrators are women and only 4% of directors are women.</li> <li>✍ Women are especially under-represented in ICT, e.g. women make up 27% of trainee programmers, 8% of principal programmers and 7% of heads of IT departments.</li> <li>✍ In mathematics and computing science, there are three times as many young male students as female</li> </ul> <p>Need to recognise relative disadvantage of different groups (eg ethnic minorities, older workers)</p>	<p><b>Aim: to identify ways of supporting job desegregation</b></p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Combating discrimination and employer perceptions and promoting desegregation among employers</li> <li>✍ Piloting ways of breaking down and overcoming stereotypes of 'women's and men's work' and roles among parents, peers, teachers, careers advisers, training providers and employers</li> <li>✍ Promoting occupational desegregation, eg in SET occupations through the entry of women at technician level and below, giving priority to</li> </ul>

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		help women train for and fill the ICT skills gap (priority could be given to young women, older women, 'multiply disadvantaged' women as appropriate)
<b>Asylum seekers</b>		
<p>EQUAL provides support for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ those whose application is under consideration</li> <li>✍ those who have been admitted under a humanitarian resettlement or evacuation programme ( current - UK )</li> <li>✍ those who have not been granted refugee status but who benefit from another form of protection ( UK - exceptional leave to remain )</li> </ul> <p>(a limited number of cases where decisions are not made within 6 months. In any case where the individual is entitled to work in the UK they will need to be covered in the employment strategy)</p>	<p>National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was established this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ asylum seekers: June 2000 - 5,900 applications. On average 20% are recognised as refugees</li> <li>✍ exceptional leave to remain: similar numbers to recognised refugees - but entitled to remain for four years and work. Not formally classed as refugees as they do not fit 1951 definition.</li> <li>✍ EQUAL provides an opportunity to develop an employment strategy in parallel with the NASS integration strategy. Early work with the Home Office, DfEE and the British Refugee Council has identified that the current system does not provide effective support because there is no continuum from asylum seeker to refugee.</li> <li>✍ Asylum applications will be processed within 2 months by April 2001. Basic labour market orientation can be provided during this period, with practical support being provided as soon as decisions are taken.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aim : to develop an employment strategy which is appropriate to the needs of asylum seekers, and those allowed to live and work in the UK</b></p> <p>Activities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ providing appropriate orientation for asylum seekers to raise awareness of the requirements of job market,</li> <li>✍ developing key support to enable swift transition to labour market once asylum seekers have been given refugee status.</li> <li>✍ identifying suitable models to enable those asylum seekers who are entitled to work in the UK to find and keep sustainable employment.</li> <li>✍ developing education and training aimed at country of origin if applications were to be refused.</li> </ul>