



**Worcestershire Connection to Opportunities**  
**Commissioning Brief – Guidance for Applicants**  
**2010 – 2011**

**This Commissioning Brief will give you the information you need in order to apply for  
Worcestershire Connections Programme Funding.**

**If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact us on:**

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## **Introduction – Worcestershire Connections**

Worcestershire faces significant challenges with some of its communities rating amongst the most deprived in the Country. Historically, unemployment has never been a big issue in Worcestershire. However, the County has challenges in terms of Worklessness with some communities facing economic and social deprivation. These are the people who are farthest from employment and who are therefore economically inactive and workless. Long-term Unemployment and Economic Inactivity (together termed as Worklessness) have become progressively concentrated within certain groups and within particular geographical communities.

Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency, has for the first time developed a programme, titled "Connection to Opportunities", to make a contribution towards addressing the issues of economic exclusion and meeting the challenge of the West Midlands output gap in the Region's economy. The intention of the Agency is to work with local intermediary bodies that have contact with people who are classed as being long term unemployed or workless, to help get people on path to employment. This is envisaged as a region wide programme that is focussed on innovative, bottom up approaches to addressing the issue, avoiding duplication with existing provisions, whilst dovetailing with local circumstances.

The Worcestershire Connections is an initiative aimed to address issues around Worklessness thereby helping those people who are economically inactive and are farthest away from the job market. The primary focus would be to initiate activities to create a significant impact on most disadvantage people and suffer economic exclusion. Interventions to help workless people can be rationalised on a number of grounds:

- To increase the overall level of employment in a local/ sub-regional/ regional/ national economy
- To reduce skills and spatial mismatches between jobs opportunities available and workless people who might fill them
- To mitigate the deterioration in skills and motivation that takes place during extended periods of Worklessness
- To tackle poverty and exclusion by helping disadvantaged people and places

A large number of third sector organisations and public sector stakeholders have demonstrated their commitment to address Worklessness in the County over the years. Many interventions/activities within the mainstream provision are being delivered in the County however all the stakeholders felt throughout the consultation process that there are few gaps

which need to be filled to address the issues surrounding Worklessness in particular areas and around specific client groups. The partners organisations also felt that 'Connections to Opportunities' would be able to address the gaps in the mainstream provisions and also would make these provisions more widely utilised by the most deprived communities residing in the County. However, it is agreed by the stakeholders no duplication of main stream provisions should be supported. However, activities which can enhance or make these main stream provisions easily accessible to these client groups might be considered. After a very extensive consultation with the partners it was agreed that the Worcestershire Connections will focus but not limited to following client groups:

- **People on Incapacity Benefits**
- **Lone Parents**
- **Ex-offenders**

The partners also agreed that:

- Focus the Worcestershire Connections programme to support the above client groups but also concentrate on the most deprived areas of the County:
  - Warndon, Worcester
  - Oldington & Foley Park, Wyre Forest
  - Pickersleigh, Malvern
  - Batchley, Redditch
- There is a clear gap in the service through main stream provisions vis-à-vis the **Outreach and Engagement**. Worcestershire Connections should be focussed to fill this gap thereby establishing links with those clients who are farthest from the job market and also unwilling or unable to participate and take advantage of main stream provisions.
- Worcestershire Connections should also focus on the After Care initiatives to address issues around sustainability and further progression of these clients which might lead to employment.
- The programme should also focus on Client Journey from total disengagement to preparation which also might lead to employment.
- Provision of subsidised employment by the VCS organisations should also be given due considerations
- Employers engagement is one other gap in the service provision especially for the Ex-Offenders

## Overall Project Objectives

The objectives for the programme in Worcestershire are to:

1. To provide 400 people assisted into employment contributing towards the core output of 'Employment Support – Number of people assisted' by the end of the project in March 2013. In the long term this will result in reduction in the long term unemployed in the county
2. To track all clients that have benefited from both employee assists and signposting and referral and recording the outcomes of the individuals so that this can be properly reported and evaluated by mid 2013. This will allow us to develop a clear understanding of the factors for success or failure of interventions leading to the ability to replicate approaches.
3. To use an innovative and sophisticated monitoring system to record the softer outcomes of individuals who have received an employee assist through the programme every 6 months where applicable for up to 18 months as well as recording key milestones that may illustrate the progression in the client journey. This will allow us to generate the true impact of the innovative interventions tested through the programme.
4. To report eligible outcomes to the assigned individual with responsibility for monitoring 'National Indicator 152 Working age people on out of work benefits' so that they are recorded as contributing towards the Local Area Agreement target. This will result in working towards reduction of working age people in Worcestershire from 9.2% in May 2007 to 8.4% in 2011 and equates to roughly 1600 additional people off benefits and into employment by 2011 as highlighted by the Worcestershire Partnership in the 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement.
5. To engage with 80 ex-offenders by March 2013 and provide documented evidence that they have progressed closer to the job market. This will result in the long term reduction of reoffending, reduced public sector burden and enhanced life chances for those involved.
6. To engage with 120 lone parents by March 2013 and provide documented evidence that they have progressed closer to the job market. This will result in the long term economic inclusion of that group and go some way to provide affected families with positive attitudes to work and enhanced life chances.

7. To engage with 200 people on incapacity benefit by March 2013 and provide evidence that they have progressed closer to the job market. This will result in the long term economic inclusion of that group and go some way to provide affected families with positive attitudes to work and enhanced life chances.
8. C2O is also required to contribute towards the Sustainable Community Strategy objective to 'tackle Worklessness', this is recognised as a key priority in the Community Strategy and it is also recognised that the third sector is a key to achieving this objective.

## **Outcomes**

This plan covers the period of three years of the Project Connection to Opportunities. Through the period of the programme the delivery agents would be required to monitor the progress throughout the journey of each individual client. This would be the overriding outcome of the programme. It is anticipated that by the end of year 2013 core outcomes of the programme will be:

1. Outreached and engaged 400 of residents of the County within the definition of Worklessness.
2. Out of these 400 the project would have helped and supported People on IB, Lone Parents and Ex-offenders as per the proportion of these clients' presence in the County i.e.:
  - a. 50% would be People on IB
  - b. 30% Lone Parents
  - c. 20% Ex-Offenders
3. Would have reduced the overall figures of Worklessness in the most deprived wards of the County:
  - a. Oldington & Foley Park, Wyre Forest
  - b. Warndon and Gross Hill, Worcester
  - c. Batchley, Redditch
  - d. Pickersleigh, Malvern Hills
4. Achieved around 25% of the LAA Target under National Indicator 152

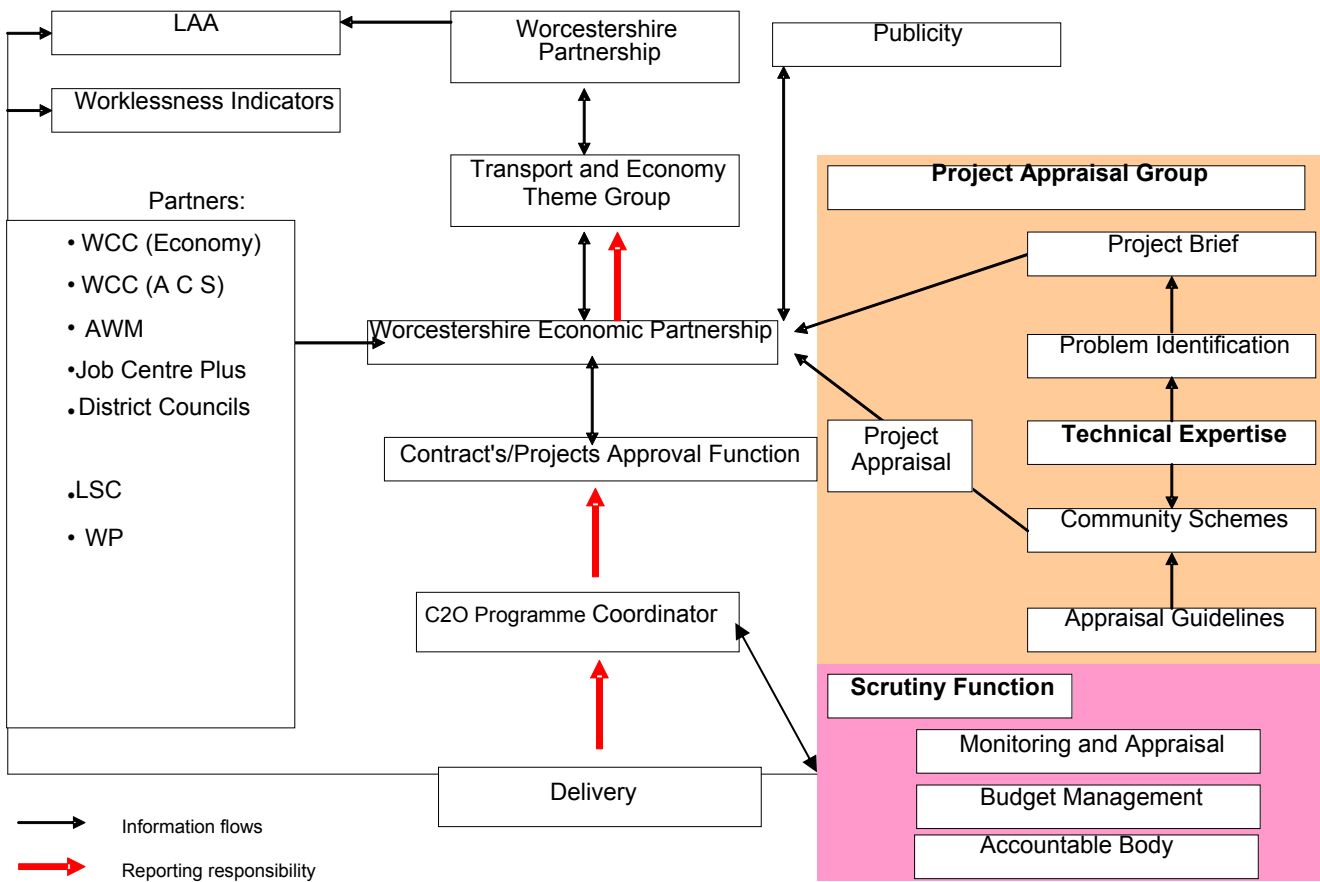
Following are anticipated to be the Non Core Outcomes for monitoring project:

1. Key work skills
  1. The acquisition of key skills e.g. team working, problem solving, numeracy skills, information technology
  2. Numbers of work placements
  3. The acquisition of language and communication skills

4. Completion of work placements
5. Lower rates of sickness related absence
2. Attitudinal skills
  1. Increased levels of motivation
  2. Increased levels of confidence
  3. Recognition of prior skills
  4. Increased feelings of responsibility
  5. Increased levels of self-esteem
  6. Higher personal and career aspirations
3. Personal skills
  1. Improved personal appearance/presentability
  2. Improved levels of attendance
  3. Improved timekeeping
  4. Improved personal hygiene
  5. Greater levels of self-awareness
  6. Better health and fitness
  7. Greater levels of concentration and/or engagement
4. Practical skills
  1. Ability to complete forms
  2. Ability to write a CV
  3. Improved ability to manage money
  4. Improved awareness of rights and responsibilities

## Programme Management

Delivery of the programme will be managed by Worcestershire's Economic Partnership which will act as the Steering Group for the programme. The figure below shows the proposed mechanism of delivery and demonstrates the functional relationship between the key stakeholders; the Steering Group, the Accountable Body, the programme management team, the project appraisal group and the local strategic partnership.



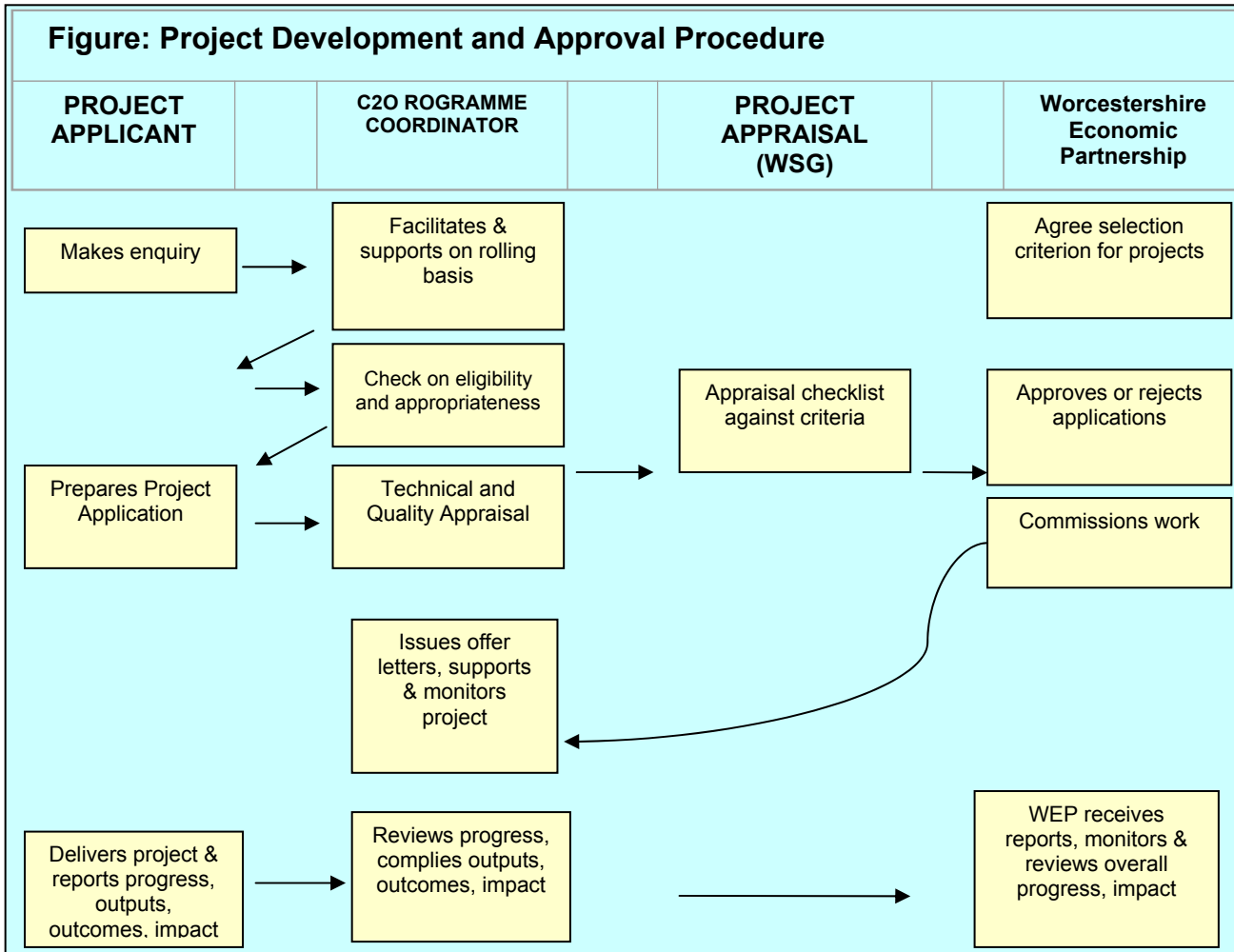
These stakeholders have specific roles in the delivery of Worcestershire Connections, which are detailed below. To ensure a robust delivery mechanism, terms of reference have been agreed by the Worcestershire Economic Partnership (WEP) for the purposes of the Worcestershire Connections and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between WEP and Worcestershire County Council as Accountable Body for the programme. The Economy and Transport Theme Group of Worcestershire Partnership – the Local Strategic Partnership – has endorsed this project delivery plan.

### Project Application and Approval Procedure

The Worcestershire Connection to Opportunities invests in target clients through a robust:

- Project development process
- Project application process
- Project appraisal process
- Project approval process
- Contracting process

Figure below represents the process through which project applications will be made, appraised, approved and subsequently monitored through the programme:



Project development will be supported by a range of stakeholders, performing different roles in the development and application process. Programme coordinator, WEP partners, Worcestershire Worklessness Steering Group, local third sector infrastructure agencies and support/service providers can all assist in the development of robust and sustainable client based projects. The projects will be appraised by the Independent Panels as per the set criterion agreed by the Worcestershire Economic Partnership (Appendix 4). It is anticipated that stakeholders will support project development in the following ways:

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Programme Coordinator                 | Programme Coordinator will make available information and advice on project development, project applications, appraisal and delivery arrangements. She will work with project applicants directly, or will support and advise WSG members and others providing support to project applicants.   |
| WEP Members                           | WEP members will support and advise project applicants, utilising guidance and training on programme management and project eligibility provided by Programme Coordinator.   |
| Public Sector Client Support Agencies | Public Sector National, regional and local agencies will signpost the third sector service providers to the programme coordinator for any specific client groups or geographical areas having concentration of these client groups.  |
| Client Support & Service Providers    | It is expected that the service providers will signpost all the other partners and service providers to fill the gap in the service delivery for any particular clients or geographical areas. The programme requires all the relevant third sector organisations to work as a partnership for the purposes of Worcestershire Connections. |

### **Project Applications**

Project Applications will be accepted throughout the year. Project applicants will be asked to set out full details of their project on an Application Form, the scope of which will include the following:

- need and demand for the project
- client group/s to be targeted
- number of clients to be benefited from the project
- prospective impact on Worklessness in an area or on a client group/s
- consistency with the programme criterion
- value for money and cost implications
- implementation plan; and
- management and monitoring arrangements.

## **Eligibility**

The following types of organisations are eligible to apply for funding under the Connection to Opportunities programme:

- Voluntary & Community Sector organisations and community groups, provided they have a formal constitution (if in doubt, please contact the Project Officer – details below) and having presence in target geographical areas and links with client groups
- Social Enterprises having links with target client groups and presence in target geographical areas
- Statutory authorities, provided the money is not used to pay for services that are a statutory requirement
- Partnerships/Consortia, provided a lead partner is identified
- Private, provided a benefit can be shown to the target clients

## **What the Worcestershire Connections wants to support**

Activities that:

- Are focussed on but not limited to following clients who are workless and economically inactive:
  - People with disabilities including people with mental health issues and Learning Disabilities
  - Lone Parents
  - EX-Offenders
- Are focussed on economically inactive residents especially the target clients but not limited only on following geographical areas:
  - Warndon, Worcester
  - Oldington & Foley Park, Wyre forest
  - Batchley, Redditch
  - Pickersleigh, Malvern Hills
- Outreach and Engagement of the abovementioned clients and in geographical areas, raising awareness of the guidance support, financial help and opportunities available and referring to the appropriate organisation.
- After Care for the above clients to address issues around sustainability and further progression of these clients leading up to full time employment.
- Provision of subsidised employment by the VCS organisations for the abovementioned clients.

- Employers' engagement in the service provision especially for the Ex-Offenders

### **Restrictions**

- Activities that do not fall into the above categories cannot be funded
- Match funding is not strictly required, however projects that can demonstrate that they have significant support from other sources will be at an advantage.
- Projects that require funding for a period of more than 2 years.
- Funding cannot be used to meet expenditure made before the agreed project start date.

In addition to the above, Appendix 2 gives a list of ineligible expenditure, as stipulated by AWM in their contract with Worcestershire County Council as Accountable Body for the Worcestershire Connections.

### **Beneficiary Contact and Profiling Data**

The beneficiary contact and profiling data needed to facilitate project evaluation are set out below. The specification has been designed also to be of value to applicants, for example, in confirming that projects are recruiting their intended targets. However, it is appreciated that successful applicants may wish to gather additional information for their own purposes. Appendix 5 provides the details of the information to be collected by the applicants.

## Appendix 1: Tasking Output Definitions and Acceptable Evidence

### **EVIDENCE**

**Person** – full contact details; date of birth; National Insurance number; employment status at time of assistance

**Assistance** – confirmation from the project of the actual assistance given and when it was given.

### **BENEFICIARIES**

For employment support, additional beneficiary information may be required.

Baseline information will be required at Application/Appraisal, with further collection of data during Closure and Evaluation in order to measure progress.

Examples of the information likely to be requested are;

- Gender/Ethnic/Age composition of individuals assisted

Note: beneficiary information should be provided in a statistical format in order to comply with Data Protection regulations.

## **Appendix 2: List of Ineligible Expenditure**

- overheads allocated or apportioned at rates materially in excess of those used for any similar work carried out by the applicant
- costs incurred prior to the start date
- notional expenditure
- payments for activity of a political nature
- depreciation, amortisation and impairment of assets purchased with the help of the Connection to Opportunities grant
- provisions
- contingent liabilities
- profit made by the applicant (e.g. if a room costs you £x to rent, but you hire it out for £x+100, you can only claim for £x of expenditure)
- dividends
- interest charges
- service charges arising on finance leases, hire purchase and credit arrangements

- costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors
- costs involved in winding up a company
- payments for unfair dismissal
- payments into private pension schemes
- payments for unfunded pensions
- compensation for loss of office
- bad debts arising from loans to employees, proprietors, partners, directors, guarantors, shareholders or a person connected with any of these
- payments for gifts and donations
- entertainments
- reclaimable VAT
- statutory fines and penalties
- criminal fines and damages
- legal expenses in respect of litigation
- eligible matched funding excludes any other European funding or any funds which are themselves matched with European funding

## Appendix 4

| Appraisal Criteria  | Score (/100) |
|---|--------------|
| <p><b>Meeting the objectives of the project.</b></p> <p>How well do the activities contribute towards the aims and objectives of this programme? Is the project innovative in its approach or will it build on effective practices? Does the proposal have existing links, contacts or networks to engage the target groups and/or priority areas?</p>  | 10           |
| <p><b>Meeting the needs of client groups</b></p> <p>Does the proposal explain the needs of the client groups that will be supported? Does the proposed activity meet the needs of the target group?</p> <p>Does the proposal explain how the activities can or will be tailored to the needs of the client group?</p>   | 10           |
| <p><b>Delivery Mechanism</b></p> <p>Is it clear what will be delivered and where? Are the arrangements for managing and monitoring the activity clear? Does the proposal make clear the roles of staff supported by the project and the amount of time clients will be supported? Are links to existing organisations or agencies clear? does the delivery organisation have local presence?</p>                                    | 20           |
| <p><b>Ensuring quality of provision</b></p> <p>Are arrangements for quality assurance in place?</p> <p>Are organisations accredited in any way e.g. Matrix, Investor in People.</p>   | 5            |
| <p><b>Timescales</b></p> <p>Are activities, timescales and responsibilities clear?</p> <p>Are milestones clear?</p> <p>Do the timescales appear well thought out and realistic?</p>   | 5            |
| <p><b>Innovation</b></p> <p>Is the Project innovative in its approach? Is it unique? Does it duplicate other projects in the County?</p>  | 15           |
| <p><b>Value for Money</b></p> <p>Does the project represent value for money in terms of outputs, outcomes, effectiveness and added value?</p> <p>Are any higher/lower costs justified?</p> <p>Does the activity appear value for money by normal standards?</p>   | 15           |
| <p><b>Track record of managing activity and management capacity</b></p> <p>Does the project applicant(s) demonstrate experience of delivering similar activity and provide evidence of successes?</p> <p>Are management systems and processes outlined?</p> <p>Is there information on the experience of any staff working on the project?</p> <p>If a partnership project, do partners have sufficient experience and does the</p> | 10           |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| partnership appear sustainable over the life of the project?  |           |
| <b>Track record of working with client groups</b><br>Does the applicant have experience of delivering activity to the target groups and/or areas identified?<br>Are any examples or evidence sufficiently illustrated | <b>10</b> |

## Appendix 5

### Contact Data

Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that beneficiary contact details as specified in table 1 below are obtained and be made available to Worcestershire County Council as part of the Project monitoring and evaluation.

| <b>TABLE 1: BENEFICIARY CONTACT DETAILS</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Information</b>                           | <b>Category</b>  |
| Name   |  |
| Address on entering C2O                      |  |
| Postcode on entering C2O                     |  |
| Address on exiting C2O                       |  |
| Postcode on exiting C2O                      |  |
| Contact Telephone Number                     |  |
| Name and address of Employer (if applicable) |  |
| Data Protection                              | C2O Participant has confirmed willingness to be contacted in relation to evaluation research |
|  | C2O Participant has declined to be contacted in relation to evaluation research              |
|  |  |

Applicants should ensure that a signed Data Protection statement is obtained and retained, confirming the willingness of beneficiaries (or otherwise) to be contacted for research purposes.

## **Beneficiary Profiling and Outcome Data**

Applicants will be responsible for ensuring that beneficiary profiling and outcome data specified in Table 2 below are gathered for each beneficiary and reported to Worcestershire County Council in anonymised form. Most beneficiary profiling data will be recorded in assessing beneficiaries' needs when they are recruited to the Worcestershire Connections project. Outcome data (e.g. covering achievement, destination and "distance travelled") will be entered when the beneficiary completes their involvement in the project. Beneficiary profiling and outcome data should be maintained on a spreadsheet that will be provided by Worcestershire County Council for the purpose. Data for each beneficiary should be entered on a separate row. Beneficiary profiling data spreadsheets should be brought up-to-date monthly. Applicants should ensure that a signed Data Protection statement is obtained and retained, confirming the awareness of beneficiaries that the information they provide will be passed to Worcestershire County Council and other research organisations in anonymised form for research purposes.

**TABLE 2: BENEFICIARY PROFILING AND OUTCOME DATA**

| <b>Information</b>  | <b>Category</b>   |
|---|---|
| Gender  | Male  |
|   | Female  |
| Age on entering C2O                                       |   |
| Ethnicity   | <b>Asian or Asian British</b>   |
|   | Asian British   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladeshi</li> <li>• Indian</li> <li>• Pakistani</li> <li>• Chinese</li> <li>• Other Asian background</li> </ul>                       |
|   | <b>Black or Black British</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African</li> <li>• Black British</li> <li>• Caribbean</li> <li>• Any other Black background</li> </ul>                                   |
|   | <b>Other Ethnic Group</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give details</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>Mixed</b>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White and Asian</li> <li>• White and Black African</li> <li>• White and Black Caribbean</li> <li>• Any other mixed background</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>White</b>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White British</li> <li>• White Irish</li> <li>• Any other white background</li> </ul>  |
| Disability (multiple recording possible)                  | No disability   |
|   | Impaired sight or hearing   |
|   | Work-limiting physical disability   |
|   | Other work-limiting medical condition   |
| Duration of Unemployment / Inactivity                     | Less than six months  |
|   | Between six months and less than one year   |
|   | 1-2 years   |
|   | 2-5 years   |
|   | more than 5 years   |
| Period since participating in employment support activity | Less than six months  |
|   | Between six months and less than one year   |
|   | 1-2 years   |
|   | 2-5 years   |
|   | more than 5 years   |

| <b>Information</b>  | <b>Category</b>   |
|---|---|
| Learning difficulty   | No learning difficulty  |
|   | Moderate learning difficulty  |
|   | Severe learning difficulty  |
| Other pre-existing barriers to labour market participation<br>(multiple recording possible) | None  |
|   | Lone parent   |
|   | Other caring responsibility   |
|   | Misuse of drugs or alcohol  |
|   | Ex-offender   |
|   | Homeless  |
|   | Itinerant - traveller   |
|   | Language barriers   |
|   | Weak literacy and / or numeracy   |
|   |   |
|   | Other   |
| Highest Prior Attainment of Full Educational and Vocational Qualifications                  | no qualifications   |
|   | School qualifications only  |
|   | NVQ Level 1   |
|   | NVQ Level 2   |
|   | NVQ Level 3   |
|   | NVQ Level 4   |
|   | NVQ Level 5   |
|   |   |
| Benefit Status (multiple recording possible)  | Job-seekers Allowance   |
|   | Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance                              |
|   | Income Support with a child under 16 and no partner                             |
|   | Other Income Support  |
|   | Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Industrial Injury Benefits |
|   | Widow's Benefit, Bereavement Benefit or Industrial Death Benefit                |
|   |   |
|   |   |
| Participation in C2O Activities (multiple recording possible)                               | Assessment and action planning  |
|   | Personal development activity other than mentoring                              |
|   | Vocational education or training  |
|   | Work experience   |
|   | Mentoring   |
| Attainment During C20 (multiple recording possible)   | Early Leaver  |
|   | Completed planned support   |
|   | Achieved a part qualification   |
|   | Achieved a full qualification   |
|   | Became engaged with mainstream employment support services                      |

| Information                                 | Category  |
|---|---|
| Destination on Exiting C2O                  | Claimant unemployed   |
|   | Economically inactive   |
|   | Continuation personal development activity other than mentoring                                     |
|   | Continuation vocational education or training   |
|   | Continuation work experience  |
|   | Continuation mentoring  |
|   | Voluntary work position   |
|   | Temporary paid job (e.g. ILM)   |
|   | Self-employment   |
|   | Permanent paid job  |
|   | Retired   |
|   | Deceased  |
| Destination unknown                         |   |
| Assessed Capacity on Entry to C2O Programme | Requires to overcome severe barriers to become ready to engage with mainstream employment support   |
|   | Requires to overcome moderate barriers to become ready to engage with mainstream employment support |
|   | Ready for mainstream employment support with additional support                                     |
|   | Ready for mainstream employment support without additional support                                  |
|   | Ready for work with additional support  |
|   | Ready for work without additional support   |
| Assessed Capacity on Exiting C2O Programme  | Requires to overcome severe barriers to become ready to engage with mainstream employment support   |
|   | Requires to overcome moderate barriers to become ready to engage with mainstream employment support |
|   | Ready for mainstream employment support with additional support                                     |
|   | Ready for mainstream employment support without additional support                                  |
|   | Ready for work with additional support  |
|   | Ready for work without additional support   |