

**Preliminary Action Research Report
to
Devon & Cornwall Business Link**

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Introduction

Preliminary research has been conducted by the Women's Business Development Agency in the following areas within the South West region, as specified by Devon & Cornwall Business Link:

Bodmin & Bodmin Moor
East Devon
North Devon
Penwith
Rame Peninsula
Torbay

'Action Research' files have been created and compiled for each of the above areas, with full localised contact details gathered, using internet/telephone/desk research, as well as conducting local visits and face-to-face meetings.

The files consist of the following sub-sections for each of the 6 areas, with contact details and information on:

Local enterprise support providers
District/local Council contacts
Local statistics
Playgroups
Community Groups/Voluntary Groups
Adult Education/Colleges
Job Centres/Careers Advice

Level of Provision

Enterprise Support Providers across Devon & Cornwall were identified and contacted to complete questionnaires, to ascertain the level of enterprise support provided to women.

Those contacted were:

Cornwall County Council Business Development Team
Enterprise Plymouth
South Hams Enterprise Agency
Torbay Enterprise Agency
Teignbridge Enterprise Agency
Devon County Council Economic Development Department
East Devon Small Industries Group
Marsh End Enterprise Agency
Mid Devon Enterprise Agency
West Devon Business Information Point
North Devon Enterprise Agency
Penwith Business Centre
Carrick Business Centre
West Cornwall Enterprise Trust
Restormel Local Enterprise Trust
Caradon Business Centre
Enterprise Tamar
Tindle Enterprise Centre
Mid-Cornwall Enterprise Trust
Caradon District Council Enterprise Centre / & Economic Development Dept
SE Cornwall Economic Development
Uni of Plymouth Enterprise / Innovation & Start-Up Team
Looe Community Business Centre

Level of business start-up support for women

In depth questionnaires were sent to all Enterprise Support Providers within the South West Region to ascertain the level of business start-up support provided to women. A distinct lack of response has unable us to comment on actual provision.

However, there does not appear to be an overall strategic approach within the South West Region, addressing the specific training or support services, potential and existing female entrepreneurs require developing successful and sustainable businesses.

Mary Gleeson @ Enterprise Tamar has offered specific women's enterprise support, and set up a Women's Enterprise Forum which has suffered from lack of funding and not been as active as hoped.

We have developed a relationship with Mary and are keen to work in partnership with her on this project, as women attending our Women's Empowerment Programme will be able to access the Women's Enterprise Centre @ Enterprise Tamer and make use of the free start-up and advice services.

North Devon Enterprise Agency have worked closely with the Business Development Centre @ North Devon College where all start-up clients attended a 'Preparation for Business' course – although not aimed exclusively at women, approx 3 in 5 of the attendees were women.

The Federation of Small Business does not offer any specialist services just for women, but does regard it's general advice and information services 'female friendly'.

Local Needs

Torbay & Penwith

Coastal areas with high dependence on tourism and fishing industries, also with high proportions of retired residents (this is also applicable in North Devon).

Bodmin/Bodmin Moor & Rame Peninsula

Remote rural areas where women experience difficulties in accessing jobs and services. This creates pockets of rural deprivation, worsened by a low wage economy that further constrains choice of housing and lifestyle.

East & North Devon

2 of over 200 market and coastal towns in the South West region, acting as centres for local employment. The South West Regional Development Agency is leading a regional community based regeneration initiative for market and coastal towns, acknowledging the changing role they play, and their importance to the economic and social development of rural parts of the South West. Hence a concentration of funding and pumped into the area based initiatives.

The needs of local women

Whilst conducting Action Research in each of the 6 areas, women were approached and informally interviewed to identify the barriers they are often faced with when considering entrepreneurship.

Many of the women confirmed they felt intimidated approaching what they consider to be a 'male dominated environment' when going through the process of setting-up their own businesses.

Whilst it is appreciated that the majority of the processes involved in setting up a small/micro business are generic across the board, female entrepreneurs however, often have specific issues which direct effect how their support needs are met.

It appears some women, particularly 'women returners', do not have as much confidence or business 'nouse' as their male counterparts, which prevents them from even considering to pursue entrepreneurship.

Lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem are all contributing factors, acting as barriers repeatedly identified in preventing women from considering self-employment. Unavailability of training or female-focused advice during school or childcare hours also rose as an issue.

Multiple Deprivation Within the South West Region

The specific ward details below are in relation to the needs of each of the 6 areas specified by Devon & Cornwall Business Link, and level of deprivation in each. Information has been taken from the Indices of Deprivation (ID 2000) – information at ward and local authority level.

Information has also been pulled from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2000) a ward level index, made up of the 6 ward level Domain Indices

Deprived wards within Bodmin & Bodmin Moor (North Cornwall)

Bodmin St Mary's (1310)

Bodmin St Petroc (1717)

Are wards within the most deprived 25% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England out of 8414 with 1 being the most deprived)

Deprived ward within East Devon

Exmouth Littleham Urban (2012) is a ward within the most deprived 25% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England out of 8414 with 1 being the most deprived)

Deprived wards within North Devon

Trinity Ward (651)

Ifracombe Central (710)

Are wards within the most deprived 10% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England (out of 8484 with 1 being the most deprived)

Deprived wards within Penwith

Penzance East (336)

Penzance West (630)

Hayle-Gwithian (790)

Are wards within the most deprived 10% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England (out of 8484 with 1 being the most deprived)

Marazion (980)

St Ives North (1105)

St Just (1226)

Hayle-Gwinear (1242)

St Erth & St Hilary (1304)

Ludgvan (1728)

St Ives South (1375)

Penzance South (1421)

St Bryan (1987)

Penzance Central (1565)

Penzance North (1668)

Are wards in Penwith within the most deprived 25% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England out of 8414 with 1 being the most deprived)

Deprived wards within Torbay

Tormohun (848)

Torwood (990)

Blatchcombe (1159)

Coverdale (1169)

Ellacombe (1538)

St Marychurch (1555)

St Peters with St Mary's (1568)

Shiphay (1862)

Wards within the most deprived 25% of wards nationally (number in brackets = ward ranking in England out of 8414 with 1 being the most deprived).

District Level summaries of the ward level Index of Multiple Deprivation

LA Name	No. of people employment deprived	No. of people income deprived
Caradon (Rame Peninsula)	3927	15326
North Cornwall (Bodmin)	4422	18093
Penwith	5290	18802
East Devon	4658	19887
North Devon	4870	18558
Torbay	9483	34533

Employment Deprivation

Those who want to work but are unable to do so through unemployment, sickness or disability – forced exclusion from the world of work. This is seen as separate deprivation from income deprivation to which lack of employment may lead.

Within the SW region, Torbay is ranked 90 out of 354 (1 being most deprived), giving an indication of the sheer numbers of people experiencing employment deprivation within the district.

Geographical Access to Services

Access to essential services is an important aspect of people's everyday lives. People with low incomes are more likely to experience the disadvantage of lack of access to services more acutely. Indicators include access to a post office, food shops, GP, primary schools.

The wards of St.Neot and Warleggan within the Cardon district, ranks 181 out of 8414 (1 being most deprived) of people suffering exclusion owing to the fact they little or no geographical access to services.

With regards to geographical exclusion, we have made links with Robert Nunney @ Bell Industries who is seeking funding to transform an old mobile breast cancer screening unit into a mobile training unit, for use in specific wards within East & North Devon.

Income Deprivation

Torbay as a district is ranked 94 out of 354 (1 being most deprived) of wards within the UK having high percentage of people experiencing Income Deprivation.

Local contacts

Within each of the 6 areas invaluable contacts have already been made and have been incorporated into the final Action Research files.

For example...

South East Cornwall Economic Development Team will allow us to use their training facilities (for a small fee), and also offer a business resource service to encourage and promote businesses to set up in South East Cornwall.

Saltash College Learning Shop run free introduction to IT and subsidised computer courses for beginners have confirmed we are able to use their facilities to deliver the WEP workshops. Likewise, Looe Community Computer and Business Centre – a Learn Direct Centre providing basic ICT skills training sessions, as well as business advice and training support.

Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives

The Neighbourhood Renewal National Strategy Action Plan as part of the Government's commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal has created a mass of activity with the SW region, specifically area based initiatives focused on Neighbourhood Renewal.

With the delivery of the project, wherever possible, contacts are made and partnerships established in order to ensure increased awareness and signposting opportunities for women to access the Women's Empowerment Programme.

New Entrepreneur Scholarships

To help budding entrepreneurs in deprived areas to access business and management skills training to help them set up and run their own businesses: Penwith, North Devon & Torbay

Community Chests

To support community involvement and activity in deprived neighbourhoods : Penwith

Community Empowerment Fund

To support community and voluntary sector involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships: Penwith

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

To enable the 88 most deprived authorities to improve services, narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country: Penwith

Action Teams for Jobs

To help those disadvantaged in the labour market get and keep jobs by working with individuals to overcome the barriers they face when looking for sustainable work: Caradon District (Rame Peninsula) & Penwith

Community Champions

To support individuals who have shown leadership in stimulating community activity or small scale community inspired projects which promote involvement & community activity: Available in all 6 wards specified by Devon & Cornwall Business Link.

Community Legal Service Partnerships

To improve access to good quality legal advice, so that people benefit from knowing their rights and how to enforce them effectively: Caradon District (Rame Peninsula) & Penwith

Market Towns Initiative

To reinvigorate small rural towns, help them meet the needs of local people and provide access to a wide range of retail, leisure, professional and public services: North Devon

Recommendations

Refer to the Final Action Research Report (November 2002)