

**DWP – Grant Management Team**  
**Assurance Visit**

**REPORT**

<b>Lead Accountable Body</b>	<b>Visit address</b>
<b>Hastings Borough Council</b>	Aquila House, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3UY.  and  Greenway Nursery, Fellowship of St Nicholas Hastings Town Children's Centre Waterworks Road Hastings, TN34 1RU  Hastings Furniture Service 6-10 Dorset Place Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1LG
<b>LAB Telephone Number</b>	01424 451397
<b>LAB Contact</b>	Dave Hinton
<b>Email Address</b>	DHinton@hastings.gov.uk
<b>GMT Visiting Officer</b>	Amy Burnell
<b>Telephone Number</b>	020-7962-8854
<b>Date of Visit.</b>	10 February 2011

**Grant Information**

<b>Future Jobs Fund</b>	<b>Grant Value</b>	<b>Job Starts Profiled</b>
FJF-2009-07-156-SE Tranche 1	£812,500	125
FJF-2009-07-156-SE-EXT Tranche 1	£1,488,500	229
<b>Performance against profile</b>	First contract met profile – 125 Second contract – 166 job starts claimed up to December CMCF.	

## **Introduction**

Amy Burnell from the Grant Management Team visited Hastings Borough Council on 10 February 2011 to ensure that Future Jobs Fund Grant Funding (FJF) is being used for the purposes that are consistent with agreed bids and compliant with the departmental requirements specified in the terms of the grant letter.

Testing was undertaken to verify that control systems are in place that meet DWP requirements. A randomly selected number of FJF employees, at different stages of the FJF experience, were interviewed to confirm that the jobs were consistent with FJF requirements.

## **Rationale**

The key risk areas that were tested were:

- That there were systems in place that clearly showed both income and expenditure in sufficient detail and that adequate supporting documentation was retained;
- That there are adequate service level agreements with partners and that they or the employer issued contracts of employment for the FJF employees;
- The jobs were for a minimum of 25 hours a week;
- They pay at least the National Minimum Wage;
- They are for at least 26 weeks;
- Suitable for young people aged 18-24 who are approaching long-term unemployment and 25+ in hotspot areas;
- Additional (i.e. the job would not have existed without the funding from the Future Jobs Fund); and
- Of benefit to the local community.

## **Background Checks**

Birmingham Payments Team stated that there were some amendments required on the CMCFs which Hastings had to resubmit. Birmingham Payments Team has had a back log of FJF claims yet to be paid.

Jobcentre Plus stated that they have worked well with Hastings Borough Council. Michael Turner attended the visit on behalf of Jobcentre Plus.

## **How does the LAB operate?**

Hastings Borough Council is the Lead Accountable Body (LAB). The LAB has strategic and operational partners to support them. They also have twenty-two third party employers that they work with.

The partners and the third party employers employ all FJF employees.

Hastings Borough Council send e-mail updates every two months to employers on any policy changes and starter information.

The partners, Sussex Coast College and Sussex Downs College provide individual advice and guidance and training to the FJF employees.

The LAB meets with the strategic partners every two months and the operational partners monthly to discuss any strategic planning or operational needs.

All the FJF employees work for a minimum of 25 hours a week and are paid at least the national minimum wage.

The recruitment process works well. The LAB first of all submits vacancy notification form and job descriptions to Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus will match the eligible claimants to each post and will provide the employers with application forms, interview planning and feedback forms before the scheduled interviews takes place. Employers will inform Jobcentre Plus claimants have been successful. The employer will offer start dates and Jobcentre Plus may offer work trials for successful candidates if appropriate.

Copies of referral letters are not kept by the LAB however the application forms front page stencil shows that Jobcentre Plus have confirmed that the claimant is eligible.

During the visit it was discovered that not all Annex K consent forms have been completed as instructed by the grant letter. However employer consent forms were in place, although they do not meet the grant letter criteria. The LAB explained that they are in the process of ensuring that the FJF employees complete the appropriate consent form.

The LAB's partners Newcep and Tomorrow's People Trust (TPT) provide a wrap around support service to FJF employees on behalf of Hastings Borough Council. The service involves developing an action plan for FJF employees in the first four weeks of the programme. The action plan document was evidenced during the assurance visit.

The wrap around service also provides one to one meetings for FJF employees at least five to seven times during the programme. A client contact continuation sheet is used to record key information from the meetings. FJF employees are supported with assistance on job search, CV writing, application writing and interview techniques. FJF employees have been advised that they can meet up with the wrap around support service whenever they feel they need more support.

The LAB runs a workshop that FJF employees can attend during the third or fourth month on the programme. This helps the FJF employees to achieve sustainable employment.

If a FJF employee has any concerns with an employer, they are asked to follow the employer policy. However if issues cannot be resolved they can speak to the partners, Newcep and TPT's wrap around service to resolve any issues they may have.

An event will be taking place in September 2011 that will award and recognise achievements by FJF employees and employers and it will also combine a job fair.

Each employer has their own individual payment method. However employers send through their claims to the LAB, backed up with a wage slip, receipts and a letter of appointment.

The payments are put on a spend monitor and is checked with the expenditure ledger to ensure the payment is correct before submitting the CMCF to the DWP Birmingham Payments Team.

The wrap around service partners are paid quarterly in arrears and the colleges are paid quarterly after FJF employees have started the programme.

Hastings Borough Council has spreadsheets in place that include employee details, starts and leavers. Also, there is a budget forecast that records in the monthly totals and what is expected to be claimed.

### **Employer/Partner management**

SLA documents are in place for the partners and the third party employers. Examples of the SLA documents were evidenced during the GMT visit. However newer third party employers have outstanding SLAs that are still to be returned. The LAB is chasing these up.

### **Job Descriptions**

Vacancy compliance with FJF criteria including community benefit and additionality is described in Annex A.

### **Employee Interviews**

Four FJF employees were selected by GMT from a list provided by Hastings Borough Council. FJF employees were interviewed and the findings from the interviews are detailed below at Annex B and summarised at Annex C.

In one case, a FJF employee interviewed by GMT had found other permanent work as a bricklayer since working at the employer Hastings Furniture Service. Another FJF employee interviewed may have his contract extended at Hastings Furniture Service.

All FJF employees interviewed at the GMT assurance visit were enjoying the FJF experience and valued the opportunity.

### **Data Security**

CMCF's are sent through using the government connect process. Any employee data is kept in a locked filing cabinet. Any personal employee information is either posted or delivered by hand.

## **Fixed Assets**

Hastings Borough Council had requested fixed assets for three lap tops for the employer, Kids Like Me. Receipts were evidenced at the GMT visit.

## **Conclusion**

In our opinion this LAB has sufficient systems in place. We are content that the assurance visit objectives and rationale, outlined in the introduction to this report, have been tested and met.

- Hastings Borough Council is to ensure that new third party employers agree and sign the SLA documents as soon as possible.
- Hastings Borough Council is to ensure that FJF employees sign and agree to the Annex K consent forms.

Amy Burnell  
Future Jobs Fund  
Grant Management Team  
Young People Employment Division

**LAB FINDINGS CHECKLIST**

Grant Manager:  
FJF no-

LAB: Hastings Borough Council

Date of visit: 10 February 2011

HBC - Hastings Borough Council  
NewCEP – Newhaven Community Employment Partnership  
TPT – Tomorrows People Trust  
SCCH – Sussex Coast College Hastings Borough Council  
SDC – Sussex Downs College  
JCP – Jobcentre Plus

**General**

Question	Response
<p>Do you work with any 3<sup>rd</sup> party employers? If yes have you a signed Service Level Agreement (SLA) or equivalent with them?</p>	<p>We are currently working with twenty-two 3<sup>rd</sup> party employers. We have signed service level agreements with them. See example attached.</p>
<p>Do you work with any partners? How do you manage them and gather information?  Are there systems in place and are they robust?</p>	<p>NewCEP and TPT provide a wrap around support service for the programme, each has responsibility for their own geographical area. SLA's have been drawn up with these providers and there is weekly contact with the LAB. SCCH and SDC provide IAGs and training for the employees. JCP refer eligible jobseekers to the employers and assist with the recruitment and selection process.</p> <p>Processes have been designed in liaison with all our delivery partners and we continually monitor their effectiveness and adapt as necessary. Copies of these processes are attached.</p> <p>HBC brings together these partners every month to monitor progress, discuss operational activity and improve effectiveness of delivery. Minutes of these meetings are available on request.</p> <p>HBC is the LAB but is actually leading a on behalf of a countywide partnership which includes the other local authorities. This partnership group meets bi-monthly to update on progress and take responsibility for strategic decision making. Minutes of these meetings are available on request.</p>

Are all customers referred by JCP? Do you keep copies of the referral letter as proof?	All customers are referred by JCP. JCP forward the application forms to the employer as the referral. HBC cross references names of successful candidates with JCP weekly.
Are all employees given the opportunity to sign an informed consent form?	All employees are given the opportunity to sign the data sharing consent form at the point of application for any FJF position. They are asked again to sign the form when they commence employment. Copies of these forms are held.
How do you ensure your data is kept securely and passed securely between yourselves, partners and Regional Payment Team?	Reporting CMCF deadline (5th of the month) means we are reliant on the E Mail system for monthly reporting from our employers. Employee Data within HBC kept in a locked filing cabinet. Communication between HBC and DWP via GovConnect.
Are you having any problems completing claim forms (CMCF) or Statements of Grant Usage?	Problems with reconciliation of number of hand over employees from month to month under section C of the claim summary. It would be useful as in most recent confirmation of grant payment to have the figure DWP are working to, as well as confirmation of the payment.
Have you purchased any fixed assets? Can we see them? Can you provide a list of these with receipts?	3 Laptops at Kids Like Me (see asset register), on site in Eastbourne, Receipts in Kids Like Me file.

### Jobs

Do you have job descriptions for the FJF jobs?	Yes we have Job descriptions for all the FJF positions.
Do the FJF jobs meet the descriptions given in the bid?	One of the roles of the Support providers is to maintain contact with FJF employees, who thus have an opportunity to raise such issues, which can then be taken up in the employee's behalf. This has happened on two occasions, and matters were resolved
Can you demonstrate the additionality of the jobs?	Yes, we ask the employers to confirm that the positions are additional and deliver community benefit. We have records of this available upon request. All our vacancies are also vetted by the FJF Vacancy Manager for JCP who considers additionally and benefit to the community. Any conflicts and uncertainties are referred to JCP for final decision.
Can you demonstrate the community benefit of the jobs?	
How many hours per week are the jobs? Can you provide timesheets and/or wage slips to prove this?	Our FJF positions are all 25-28 hours per week. We can provide a wage slips to prove this for any employee at any stage.

<p>Is there a signed contract with the FJF employee? Do you or the end employer hold copies?</p>	<p>All FJF employees are expected to adhere to current employment law. We hold copies of the appointment letters for all employees and expect employers to do the same.</p>
<p>How often do you meet with the employee to review their progress in the role? Do you keep written records of this?</p>	<p>Employees are given the opportunity to meet with our wrap around support providers on at least 5 occasions over their 6 month employment. Our wrap around support providers hold details of each appointment with employees and notes on the discussions which took place. We are provided with reports which set out the dates on which all employees are seen by wrap around support. As part of our internal audit we requested a sample of case files from the wrap around support providers which were found to be detailed and complete.</p>
<p>What training have you offered the employee?</p>	<p>All employees are entitled to access up to £1k to pay for career focussed training. This is usually accessed through the wrap around support providers who set up IAG appointments for employees with either SDC or SCCH. Some training is delivered by specialist providers and some is delivered in house by the employers. We hold records of all training activity. We also have records of soft skills that employees have developed during their 6 months.</p>
<p>What systems do you have in place for employees to raise concerns and escalate issues?</p>	<p>Employees are considered employees of their respective employers and should follow the procedures laid down by that employer. If the issues are not resolved this way employees are encouraged to raise concerns with their wrap around support provider, who also have a role acting as advocates on behalf of employees if required.</p>
<p>What systems do you have in place to help the employee into sustainable employment? Do you have any written evidence such as job search activity, C.V improvement/completion, exit interviews etc.</p>	<p>Throughout the employees 6 month employment they are encouraged to use the wrap around support service to develop an action plan for achieving sustainable employment. They are offered support from day 1 in job search, CV And application writing and interview techniques. This activity is recorded and can be supplied upon request. During employees 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> month they are invited to attend a workshop which focuses them on achieving sustainable employment and offers practical learning around the recruitment process. 45 employees have attended so far and feedback has been good. Exit interviews are carried out by the employer and the wrap around support provider. We hold copies of these documents.</p>

<p>How many early leavers have you had? What reasons did the employees give for leaving?</p>	<p>38 early leavers as at December 2010. We do not as a matter of course collect the reasons for early leavers. Please find attached a breakdown of early leaver destinations for all leavers, where known.</p>
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I confirm that original paperwork was seen and tested to verify findings.

**EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST**

Grant Manager: Amy Burnell

LAB: Hastings Borough Council

FJF-2009-07-156-SE &amp; FJF-2009-07-156-SE-EXT

Date of Visit: 10 February 2011

<b>Name</b>	<b>Tina Frost</b>	<b>Hayley Bone</b>
<b>Start Date</b>	<b>17/09/2010</b>	<b>15/11/2010</b>
<b>Leave Date</b>	<b>N/a</b>	<b>N/a</b>
<b>Employer (if different from LAB)</b>	<b>Greenway Nursery</b>	<b>Greenway Nursery</b>
<b>Questions: Job</b>		
What is your job title? Or What do you do?	Nursery Practitioner Feeding children, cleaning, story time, gardening	Nursery Practitioner Pre-schooling, Feeding children, first aid, cleaning.
Does the job match with the job description you were given before you started	Yes	Yes
Have you had any experience in this type of role before?	Yes	Yes
How many hours do you work a week?	25 hours	25 hours
What is your hourly rate of pay?	£5.93	£5.93
Do you have a signed contract with the organisation?	Yes	Yes
How long is your contract scheduled to run for?	6 months	6 months
Are you aware of the procedures for raising concerns and escalating issues?	Yes – see line manager	Yes – see supervisors
<b>Training</b>		
Have you been given any training for the job?	Yes – First aid and child protection	Yes – First aid and food hygiene.
Have you been given the opportunity to pursue any formal qualifications in your role?	Will be doing an NVQ Level 3 in Childcare	Will be doing an NVQ in childcare
Do you feel you have the sufficient skills required to carry out your role?	Yes	Yes
<b>Job Search</b>		
Are you given time during your working hours to look for a job?	No	Yes
What help, if any have you been given in your job search?	None, not looking	Yes – have help at college with interview

		techniques.
Has there been any discussion about the possibility of you being made permanent in this role after your FJF period finishes?	Want to stay on voluntary, but no paid work available	No
Have you been given any help to create/improve your CV?	No but did have paid work at JCP	No, but will be having a training course.
Do you think there is anything extra that could be done to help you in your job search?	N/a	No
Have you had an exit interview? If not is one scheduled?	N/a	N/a
<b>Other</b>		
Are you enjoying your FJF role? and Have you found your FJF experience useful? Do you think it will help you to get another job in the future? <b><i>If so, and the story is a good one – would you mind us using your comments as part of our evaluation. [NB: Make sure that comments are recorded and agreed by Employee. Pass to the evaluation team if considered suitable.]</i></b>	Yes Yes Refreshed me! Learnt about the nursery again and have gained experience.  I hope so.	Yes, love it. Yes Have more training and have more experience to help me get a job.  Yes
(For employees at month 4 or 5 of their employment) Have you spoken to one of the Special Advisers at Jobcentre Plus about how your employment is progressing and other job search support that may be appropriate? [Note: These Customers will be entitled to two in work interventions at month 4 and again at month 5 of employment if employment commenced after 12/4 and 1 at month 5 if before 12/4]	No (Partners support the employee with job search, so JCP do not feel they need anymore support)	N/a

**I confirm that original paperwork was seen and tested to verify findings.**

**Grant Manager:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST**

Grant Manager: Amy Burnell  
FJF-2009-07-156-SE & FJF-2009-07-156-SE-EXT

LAB: Hastings Borough Council

Date of Visit: 10 February 2011

<b>Name</b>	<b>Joseph Light</b>	<b>Gary Clark</b>
<b>Start Date</b>	<b>4/01/2011</b>	<b>20/09/2010</b>
<b>Leave Date</b>	<b>11/02/2011</b>	<b>N/a</b>
<b>Employer (if different from LAB)</b>	<b>Hastings Furniture Service</b>	<b>Hastings Furniture Service</b>
<b>Questions: Job</b>		
What is your job title? Or What do you do?	Warehouse and Delivery Assistant Moving furniture and making deliveries.	Promotions Officer Marketing – newspaper ads, leaflets and the web.
Does the job match with the job description you were given before you started	Yes	Yes
Have you had any experience in this type of role before?	No	No
How many hours do you work a week?	25 hours	25 hours
What is your hourly rate of pay?	£5.93	£5.93
Do you have a signed contract with the organisation?	Yes	Yes
How long is your contract scheduled to run for?	6 months	6 months
Are you aware of the procedures for raising concerns and escalating issues?	Yes would see line manager or chief executive	Yes – see line manager
<b>Training</b>		
Have you been given any training for the job?	Yes – Health and Safety	Yes – health and safety, first aid, fire safety, web design and ways into teaching course
Have you been given the opportunity to pursue any formal qualifications in your role?	NVQ in warehousing	No
Do you feel you have the sufficient skills required to carry out your role?	Yes - easy	Yes

<b>Job Search</b>		
Are you given time during your working hours to look for a job?	N/a	Yes
What help, if any have you been given in your job search?	N/a	Word of mouth and on line.
Has there been any discussion about the possibility of you being made permanent in this role after your FJF period finishes?	Have found a job as a bricklayer that starts next week.	No, but there maybe an extension to contract.
Have you been given any help to create/improve your CV?	No	Yes
Do you think there is anything extra that could be done to help you in your job search?	N/a	No
Have you had an exit interview? If not is one scheduled?	Yes	N/a
<b>Other</b>		
Are you enjoying your FJF role? and Have you found your FJF experience useful? Do you think it will help you to get another job in the future? <b><i>If so, and the story is a good one – would you mind us using your comments as part of our evaluation. [NB: Make sure that comments are recorded and agreed by Employee. Pass to the evaluation team if considered suitable.]</i></b>	Yes – nice relaxed atmosphere.  Yes – helped me back into manual work.  Yes	Yes Yes Have met interesting people and being back in employment give good opportunities.  Yes, hope so.
(For employees at month 4 or 5 of their employment) Have you spoken to one of the Special Advisers at Jobcentre Plus about how your employment is progressing and other job search support that may be appropriate? [Note: These Customers will be entitled to two in work interventions at month 4 and again at month 5 of employment if employment commenced after 12/4 and 1 at month 5 if before 12/4]	N/a	No (Partners will ask about job search)

**I confirm that original paperwork was seen and tested to verify findings.**

**Grant Manager:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

## Checklists

## Annex C1

### EMPLOYEES TO BE SEEN

Grant Manager: Amy Burnell                      LAB: Hastings Borough Council  
FJF-2009-07-156-SE & FJF-2009-07-156-SE-EXT

Date of Visit: 10 February 2011

Name of Employee	JCP Referral Letter or eligibility confirmed Y/N	Consent form Completed Y/N	Payroll evidence seen Y/N	Hours per week	Start Date	End Date if applicable	Exit Interview conducted Y/N
Tina Frost	Y	*See note	Y	25	19/09/2010	N/a	N/a
Hayley Bone	Y	*See note	Y	25	15/11/2010	N/a	N/a
Gary Clark	Y	*See note	Y	25	20/09/2010	N/a	N/a
Joseph Light	Y	Y	Y	25	04/01/2011	11/02/2011	N

\* Not all consent forms met the grant criteria. However the LAB is implementing the Annex K consent forms from the grant letter for FJF employees to complete.

I confirm that original paperwork was seen and tested to verify findings.

Grant Manager: Amy Burnell

Date: 10/02/2010