

Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association

The Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association is one of 12 tenants associations in Leicester City representing the views of local tenants and residents. The association recently delivered a two year project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The project provided pre-business support to potential entrepreneurs in the New Parks area of Leicester. Funding was focused on people who were interested in starting a business, but needed advice and guidance. This support increased entrepreneurial confidence; knowledge; capacity and access to procurement opportunities.

The emphasis of the project's support was on community business coaching and support, equipping individuals with the capability and knowledge to undertake enterprising activities.

The total project value of Hand in Hand was £60,305. Match funding for the ERDF investment came from ERDF Leicester City Council's Working Neighbourhoods fund with an ERDF intervention rate of 72 percent.

Hand in Hand would advise anyone applying for ERDF funding to:

- Be patient;
- Be prepared to provide information on a regular basis; and
- Keep an eye on both their costings and what is happening externally that could affect their project delivery.

In terms of the delivery and management

of ERDF contracts, Hand in Hand recommend:

- Regular communication is maintained with the ERDF project manager;
- Plenty of time is allowed for monitoring and administration; and
- Most importantly that successful applicants, however small, believe that their organisation is capable of delivering the project themselves.

The most important lessons Hand in Hand learned from their ERDF experience were that:

- It is possible for a small VCS organisation to deliver and manage a contract;
- It is a myth that ERDF projects are difficult to monitor;
- Through the experience of running an ERDF funded project, small VCS organisations can improve their operational and management systems overall.

For further information on the Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association email handinhand3@btconnect.com.