

11.0 Recruiting and Supporting Projectworkers



Projectwork at Newteam

11.1 Why this theme?

The majority of businesses, community groups and educational organisations would like to reduce waste. However, businesses lack time, community groups lack the resources or knowledge and educational organisations are often not aware of waste issues.

A separate problem is that many recent graduates lack the experience to get jobs in the environment and are being forced to leave the environmental sector at the first hurdle.

This theme examines how Corby Waste Not, in partnership with StudentForce, has brought together recent graduates with businesses, community groups and educational organisations through shared environmental projects.



Schools

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

11.2 What we did

11.2.1 The pros and cons of recruiting graduates

11.2.1.1 The pros

Recent graduates are usually enthusiastic and eager to make things happen. They have a detailed and current knowledge on their subject and are often keen to gain work experience over and above financial rewards. By recruiting recent graduates, companies have the opportunity to develop the individual to fit their organisation. Many of Corby Waste Not's Projectworkers went on to gain permanent employment with the companies that they worked with during the scheme (see 11.2.3). Companies that share a Projectworker, as done by Marlec Engineering and Pauleys (see theme 4), can also benefit from increased networking and the development of relationships with other companies.

"The Corby Waste Not Projectwork enabled me to gain the experience for the job I really wanted"

**Diane Stevens,
former Corby Waste
Not Projectworker**

Schemes like Corby Waste Not provide a foot in the door for recent graduates, giving them an opportunity to impress potential employers, gain relevant work experience, develop career contacts, learn transferrable skills and receive

training, including attending relevant conferences and workshops. Section 11.2.3 lists the Projectworkers directly involved in Corby Waste Not and provides information on their employment after the Projectwork.



11.2.1.2 The cons

The rapid turnover of short-term employees can lead to continuity problems in longer projects. These longer projects can be compared to a relay race, where it is important that each new employee picks up the baton smoothly and gets on with the race. If there are no procedures in place, time can be wasted by new employees having to pick up the baton as they struggle to find out about what previous Projectworks have done. An additional issue is that some recent graduates lack commercial experience and require more day-to-day support than others.

11.2.2 Recruiting recent graduates

11.2.2.1 The StudentForce for Sustainability story

StudentForce for Sustainability is a national educational charity that has been operating since 1996. The charity works with young people, undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates from all over the UK, with some from overseas.



StudentForce has placed over 250 recent graduates on Projectworks between 2 and 12 months long in business, community groups and educational organisations. To help cover living expenses, Projectworkers receive a payment at or above the National Minimum Wage for full time work. The StudentForce web page can be found at www.studentforce.demon.co.uk.

“What you do is so worthwhile, and the placements give the graduates the experience they need to follow their dreams”

James Trickett
Projectworker,
Corby Waste Not

11.2.2.2 A guide to recruiting recent graduates

StudentForce has developed a best practice procedure for developing and managing Projectworks comprising seven stages.

Stage 1 – Confirming Projectwork

The potential client is contacted to discuss the Projectwork objective, which should be a distinct short-term project promoting sustainability. The costing, timings, base, support and employer are confirmed in a Projectwork Agreement. The Projectwork Objective, Outputs, timings, base and costs are drafted in a Projectwork Description and budget. should be prepared.

Stage 2 – Shortlisting applicants

The Projectwork is widely advertised by email and webpage. Between 10 and 20 suitable Projectworkers are shortlisted and 4 candidates interviewed. This may involve inviting up to 6 potential interviewees, to cover last minute drop-outs.

Stage 3 – Interviewing potential Projectworkers

Interviews are arranged and held, allowing about 1 hour per candidate. An interview panel is confirmed with question outlines for each interviewer. Candidates are only be marked against the selection criteria advertised. Feedback is offered to the unsuccessful candidates. A date is arranged for the initial planning workshop.

Stage 4 – Planning the Projectwork

At the planning workshop, the Projectworker is introduced to the skills required of project management. The Projectwork vision, objectives and outputs are agreed and the Projectwork is planned in terms of timed outputs. These are recorded in detail by the Projectworker and then sent to all concerned. Employment contract details, induction, learning needs and regular contact between the Projectworker and client are confirmed. A date for further contact, network meetings and the Review Meeting are also confirmed.

Stage 5 – Supporting the Projectwork

11.0 Recruiting and Supporting Projectworkers

A Projectworker newsletter and contact details of other Projectworkers is circulated. A brief review by phone identifies any issues or problems and opportunities for learning new skills, visiting different employment sectors and phone contact with groups of Projectworkers and clients. Guidance on job hunting and further employment opportunities are offered to Projectworkers.

Stage 6 – Reviewing and promoting the Projectwork

The Projectworker and client plans the final Review Meeting and wider presentation about 2 weeks before the end of the Projectwork. Photos, press cuttings and quotes are used to design a Projectwork Profile. The Projectwork is promoted widely to key partners and users and the media.

Stage 7 – Evaluating

The client and Projectworker are asked to complete quality of service questionnaires. Feedback is sent to funders and partners, usually on a quarterly basis. The Projectworker and client are invited to further celebratory events.

11.2.3 The Corby Waste Not case study

Figure 39 shows the Projectworks and Projectworkers that collectively made the Corby Waste Not Scheme. The scheme consisted of 30 Projectworks over 30 calendar months, providing a total of 450 weeks paid work experience for 25 recent graduates.

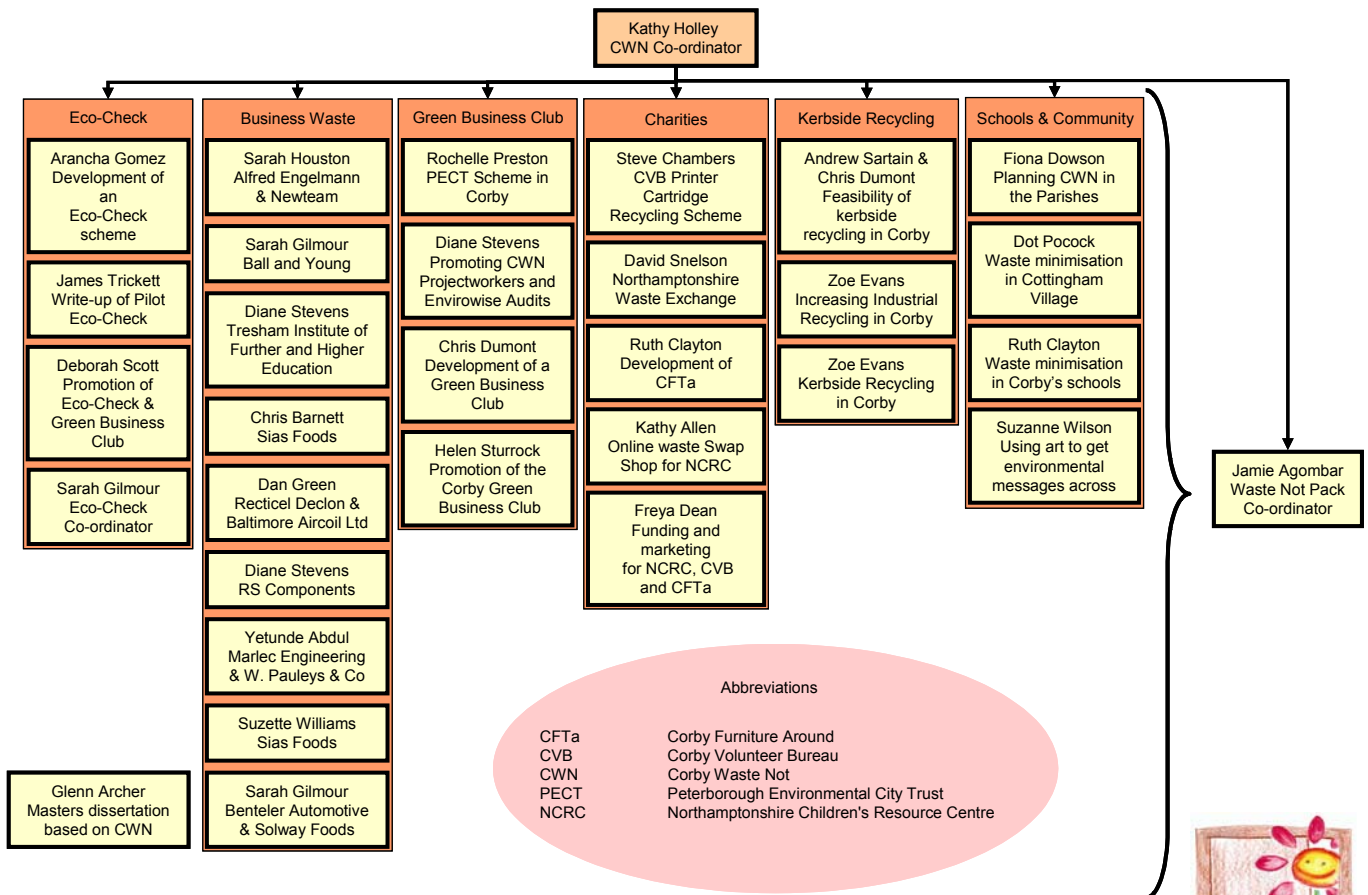


Figure 39 Corby Waste Not Projectworkers

11.0 Recruiting and Supporting Projectworkers

Figure 40 provides details of each Projectwork and the jobs that Projectworkers got after they left Corby Waste Not. This employment data is analysed by sector in figure 41. The chart shows that, of the known Corby Waste Not Projectworkers, 77% went on to gain employment and 27% went onto higher education. Of the Projectworkers that gained employment, 86% went into the environmental sector.

Projectworker	Projectwork title	Employer after Corby Waste Not	Job title after Corby Waste Not
Arancha Gomez	Eco-Check Co-ordinator	Foundacion Ecologia y Desarrollo	Research Asistant, Investments
Chris Barnett	Green Business Club Promoter - Oakley Hay Industrial Estate	Lea and Perrins	Accounts Manager
Chris Dumont	Green Business Club Promoter - Earlstrees Industrial Estate	University of West England	Student
Dan Green	Waste Minimisation Researcher	Cranfield University	Student
David Snelson	Waste Exchange Co-ordinator	Sheffield University	PhD
Deborah Scott	Green Business Club and Eco-Check Co-ordinator	Army	Officer Training
Diane Stevens	Green Business Club Promoter - Weldon Industrial Estate	Weetabix	Environment Officer
Dot Pocock	Parish and Environment Waste Officer	StudentForce	Rural Futures Program Manager
Fiona Dowson	Community Co-ordinator	Redbridge District Council	Community Waste Officer
Freya Dean	Promotion and Funding Officer	WasteWatch	Development Officer, National Waste Awareness Initiative
Helen Sturrock	Green Business Club Co-ordinator	York University	Student
James Trickett	Eco-Check Co-ordinator	Shanks Waste Solutions	Trainee Manager
Jamie Agombar	Community Co-ordinator	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Information Assistant
Kathy Allen	Business-Community Waste Store Researcher	Rutland County Council	Waste Management Assistant
Kathy Holley	CWN Co-ordinator	ONGOING	ONGOING
Rochelle Preston	Corby PECT Scheme Co-ordinator	Groundwork	Business Waste Minimisation Advisor
Ruth Clayton	Waste Minimisation Education Officer	Groundwork	WasteWise Officer
Sarah Gilmour	Waste Minimisation Researcher	Knight Piesold Consulting	Environmental Scientist
Sarah Gilmour	Eco-Check Co-ordinator	ONGOING	ONGOING
Sarah Houston	Waste Minimisation Researcher	Southampton University	Research Assistant
Steve Chambers	Corby Waste Not Researcher	Three Rivers District Council	Web designer
Suzanne Wilson	Community Art Development Officer	ONGOING	ONGOING
Suzette Williams	Waste Minimisation Researcher	unknown	unknown
Yetunde Abdul	Waste Minimisation Researcher	Imperial College, London	Student
Zoe Evans	Industrial Recycling Research Assistant	University College Northampton	Northamptonshire Business Environmental Awards Co-ordinator

Figure 40 Corby Waste Not Projectworkers and Projectwork



Schools

Businesses

Community Groups

Waste Not Partnerships

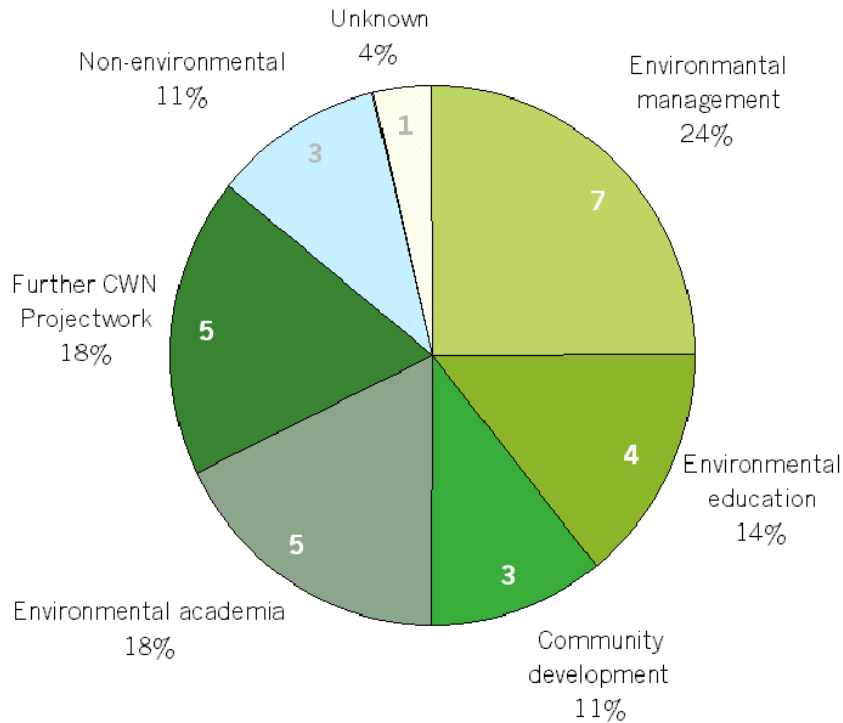


Figure 41 Graph showing the employment sectors that Corby Waste Not Projectworkers entered after finishing their Projectwork. The numbers in each segment refer to the number of Projectworkers

11.3 It's over to you...



11.4.1 Aim

To develop a successful waste minimisation project that employs one or more recent graduates or students.

11.4.2 Actions

If you have graduated within the last two years, or are looking for a placement from university, and would like to gain work experience in the environmental sector, contact StudentForce. Alternatively, you could try and establish your own environmental project by contacting local businesses, community groups and educational organisations. Theme 2 provides advice on working with others and theme 13 provides advice on gaining financial grants and awards.

If you work for an organisation that wants to reduce waste and could benefit from having a recent graduate undertaking an environmental project, contact StudentForce. Alternatively, have a look at the 7 stages in section 11.2.2.2 and consider recruiting your own recent graduate or setting up a graduate recruitment scheme.

11.4 Summary

StudentForce for Sustainability is a charity that brings together young people, including recent graduates, with businesses, community groups and educational organisations through sustainable development schemes, such as Corby Waste Not. Corby Waste Not had positive social, economic and environmental outcomes (see 2.2.3) and increased employability for recent graduates (see 11.2.3). As the Corby Waste Not Scheme has shown, it can be extremely beneficial and worthwhile to facilitate projects between recent graduates and existing organisations.

11.5 Troubleshooting

I'm sceptical about having lots of short-term Projectworkers rather than one long-term Projectworker

The more Projectworkers you have, the more CV's you are enhancing and the more opportunities you are opening for recent graduates.

Problems with lack of continuity can be addressed by having important project data stored in databases or a series of dated briefing papers, including the project aims, the progress made to date, a 'to-do' list, a contacts list and a 'who's who' list

One of the recent graduates at interview has lots of experience and already has a good job in the environment. I'm sure that they would be best for the project, but they don't really need the work experience. Should I favour the other candidates?

Recruiting Projectworkers is a difficult balancing act. On the one hand, you want the best person for the job. On the other, you want to give someone an opportunity and help his or her career. The decision will depend on the persons involved and the job in question

The money isn't great, so why will recent graduates apply?

Recent graduates can gain valuable work experience, transferable skills, career contacts and a reference. It may be worthwhile offering a cash bonus on completion of the project. StudentForce also offers a Projectwork Profile, effectively a certificate of achievement, for all Projectworkers

11.6 Contacts



StudentForce for Sustainability
www.studentforce.demon.co.uk

 Charitable & Voluntary Organisations