



# Conlig, Green Road Site: Service User Opinions

The results of one to one interviews with service users to discover if the activities at the Conlig Work Skills Green Road site are to their satisfaction.

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### Background to Conlig Work Skills

The Conlig Work Skills project was set up in response to an identified need for service users in Kimberley House to be afforded an opportunity to take part in work skills.

At first Conlig consisted of the Cookie Company that was sited in the Church Hall, Conlig. The Cookie Company makes, packages and sells cookies and other baked goods to local businesses in the community.

Today, Conlig Work Skills is based over three sites: the Church Hall along with portacabins; a garden project in a site across the road from the Church Hall; and most recently a site at Green Road, Bangor.

Conlig provides work skills for up to 27 service users with learning disabilities and acquired brain injury.

### The Way Forward:

#### Conlig and the Moving Up Project

Service users at Conlig are currently offered the opportunity to take part in the Moving Up Project. This project commenced in April 2012 and involves five Praxis Care work skills schemes for adults with a learning disability.

The aim of the Moving Up Project is to enhance training and employment opportunities for service users through person centred training and to further develop social enterprise schemes within Praxis Care.

Therefore, the Moving Up Project adopts the overall strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NI ESF) to 'reduce economic activity and increase workforce skills'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland European Social Fund (ESF) Programme 2007-2013. Accessed 12/11/2012 from:

The Moving Up Project aims to do this by fulfilling targets set by the Northern Ireland Executive to: 'improve productivity by increasing the skill level of the workforce'; 'tackle barriers to employment and employability'; and improve 'employability and skills'<sup>2</sup>.

### Moving Up Project: objectives

The Moving Up Project aims to help services users into sustainable employment by offering up to 94 service users the opportunity to avail of<sup>3</sup>:

- 💡 Participation at five separate training and assessment centres throughout Northern Ireland;
- 💡 Four separate basic skills programmes four times per year in all sites;
- 💡 Residential – one per annum per five locations to develop social capacity skills and self confidence;
- 💡 Dedicated one to one counselling;
- 💡 Dedicated one to one training and career guidance;
- 💡 Individualised training needs analysis;
- 💡 Personalised training programme;
- 💡 Involvement in four 20 week dedicated training programmes per annum;
- 💡 58 people achieving a recognised NVQ qualification in a range of areas including catering, hospitality, horticulture, food preparation and ICT.

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[http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/niesfprog07\\_13.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/niesfprog07_13.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Economic Strategy: Comprehensive Action Plan. Northern Ireland Executive. Accessed on 12/11/2012 from

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/economic-strategy>

<sup>3</sup> Economic Appraisal of NI ESF Grant Funding Application: Moving Up! 16 March 2011: Tribal.

### Activities of the Moving Up Project

The Moving Up Project uses the Work Star Outcomes Star<sup>4</sup> to provide baseline and progress assessments of service users' readiness to work. Through discussion during the completion of the Work Star service users and staff complete an action plan that is person centred.

The Work Star action plans are reviewed on a three monthly basis and the Work Star itself is reviewed on a six monthly basis for each service user.

The Moving Up Project gained National Open College Network (NOCN) training centre status in order to provide in-house training to service users. This training is provided in the key areas of: ICT; Catering; Hospitality; Horticulture; Social Skills; and Employment Skills. In addition to 92 units available to service users on attaining training centre status, new courses can be designed to meet service users' needs and goals.

### The evaluation:

In response to concerns raised by a service user at the main Conilg Work Skills site (i.e. the Cookie Company and Gardens) the Praxis Care Research Department were asked to carry out an evaluation of the service.

In February 2013 a research officer visited the Cookie Company and Garden sites and interviewed a total of 17 service users on a one to one basis.

A short survey was completed at the start of the interview followed by questions to ascertain what changes service users hoped for and have experienced with regard to the Moving Up Project.

Additionally, 11 staff members took part in a focus group. Whilst the main focus of the group was to discover any changes experienced due to the Moving Up Project, staff also had the opportunity to provide comment on the issues raised by service users during their interview. For this purpose a draft report of service users' views was provided prior to the focus group taking place.

Staff's response to the comments made by service users at the Cookie Company and Garden sites can be found in the report entitled: 'Conlig: Service User and Staff Opinions'.

### Focus of this report:

Service users at the Green Road site completed the same survey and were asked the same questions as those in the Cookie Company and Gardens. A total of 6 service users took part in small focus groups rather than one to one interviews as none of these service users reported being influenced by others. A further two service users asked to be interviewed on a one to one basis. This report focuses on their views.

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<sup>4</sup> Work Star: The Outcomes Star for work and learning. Triangle Consulting Ltd. Accessed on: 12/11/2012 from: <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/work/>

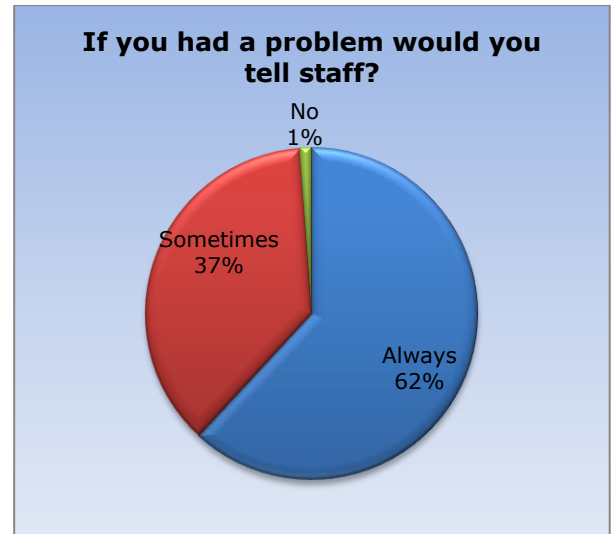
# **SERVICE USER OPINIONS**

**OF THE GREEN ROAD SITE**



## CONLIG: SERVICE USER OPINIONS

### The Survey Said...



Most service users were happy with the way that staff helped them and were treated the way they liked to be treated. Comments mentioned staff and the activities at the Green Road: *'I'm happier here'*, *'staff are very nice and kind'* and *'I'm happy doing work'*.

Two thirds of service users reported that they had goals.

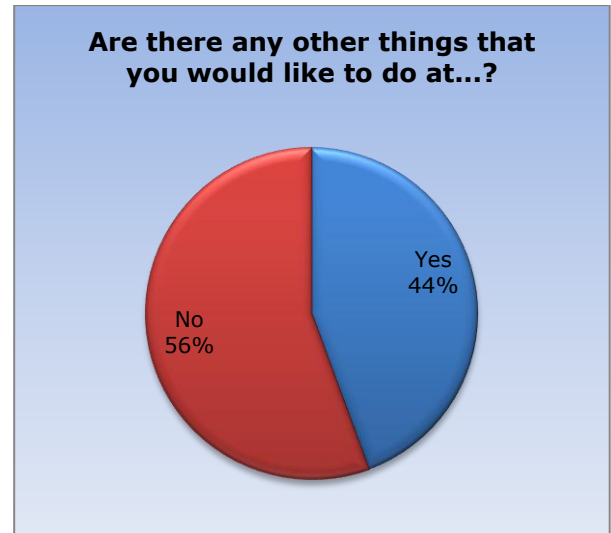


Almost all service users indicated that they would always tell staff if they had a problem.

Some service users talked about their goal to find work placements or *'take a job'*.

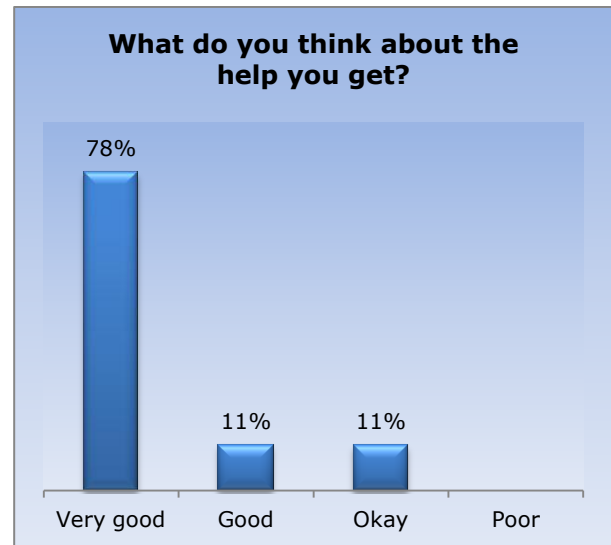
## CONLIG: SERVICE USER OPINIONS

Service users reported that staff helped them to work toward their goals.



Additional activities service users would have liked included: 'more computers, 'more bingo', 'more bus trips out for the day'.

When asked to think about whether the Green Road site had enough of the things that service users liked to do, almost all service users felt that it did 'a lot of [the] time'.



Service users felt that the help received was 'very good'.



Most service users reported being 'very happy' or 'happy' at the Green Road site.

### **Moving Forward? – The Moving Up Project and Conlig Work Skills:**

#### Prior to the Moving Up Project:

During interview service users were asked to describe what a normal day was like at Conlig Work Skills (and use of the Green Road site) before the commencement of the Moving Up Project.

Service users indicated that before Moving up Project, they took part in activities such as 'painting' or 'I used to be in the gardens'.

Service users also reported that they undertook courses ('computers') for which they received certificates/qualifications.

#### Hoped for Changes:

When asked what they hoped would change for them due to taking part in the Moving Up Project it was stated that '*learning other things*' was the main thing service users would like to happen.

#### Perceived Changes:

The only changes mentioned due to the Moving Up Project were changes in staffing.

#### Other comments:

Service users took the opportunity to comment on the Conlig Work Skills main site and stated that: '*Conlig was freezing*' and that they '*prefer to stay in [the] Green Road*' site because '*it's warmer*'.