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**University  
of Glasgow** | Training & Employment  
Research Unit

**EVALUATION OF THE PERSONAL BEST (SCOTLAND)  
PILOT PROGRAMME IN GLASGOW**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU)  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Personal Best Background

1. The Personal Best (PB) programme is an employability initiative targeted at individuals furthest from the labour market which uses volunteering and the 2012 London Olympic Games to attract clients. Originally developed in England, it consists of client engagement, advice and guidance, personal development, vocational training, volunteering experience and aftercare.
2. The Scottish PB pilot was launched in Glasgow in August 2010 to test whether the PB programme could be rolled out across Scotland to help achieve a greater legacy from the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

### Personal Best Pilot Targets

3. The PB pilot's targets are to support 150 participants and on completion:
  - 40% to enter employment.
  - 40% to enter further education or training.
  - 80% to gain a volunteer place.

### Personal Best Pilot Delivery

4. There are four broad elements to the PB pilot's activities: client engagement; SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events course; 20 hours mandatory volunteering; and progression and aftercare support.
5. The pilot is overseen by the Scottish Government's Pathways to Employment '*Flourishing*' Legacy Group and Personal Best Steering Group and delivered through Glasgow East Regeneration Agency's (GERA) Personal Best Team in conjunction with delivery partners including Glasgow Local Regeneration Agency (LRA) Network, Jobcentre Plus, John Wheatley College, Glasgow Life and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).
6. The PB pilot's total cost is £196,500, which equates to £1,300 per participant.

### Personal Best Pilot Outcomes

7. The pilot has been very effective at engaging the traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed, male client group. Three-quarters of participants had been unemployed for at least one year and many have additional barriers.
8. Given the challenging nature of the client group, the pilot's outcomes are impressive.
  - 84% of starters have completed the 10 week course.
  - 47% of completers have entered employment.
  - 53% of completers have entered further education or training.
  - 85% of completers have engaged in further volunteering.
9. The pilot's job entry rate of 47% and cost per job of £2,800 compares favourably with England's Personal Best programme and other similar employability programmes.

### Personal Best Participant Feedback

10. 96% of Personal Best participants surveyed were either very satisfied or satisfied with the pilot. 82% felt it would help them get a job.

11. Feedback was strongest in terms of the course content, the course tutor and the experience gained from the volunteer placements. However, some participants felt the range of volunteer placements available and the organisation on the day at some events could have been improved.

### Personal Best Stakeholder Feedback

12. The PB pilot is primarily viewed by stakeholders as an employability programme which has been effective at engaging with traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed males. In addition, the pilot acts as a platform into education, training and volunteering.
13. The pilot has learned from England's Personal Best programme and has been very well coordinated by GERA's PB Team, whose efforts in engaging clients, sourcing volunteer placements and developing progression opportunities are widely valued by stakeholders.

### Conclusions and Looking Forward

14. The PB pilot is an example of UK Personal Best good practice and has achieved very strong outcomes given the economic climate in which the pilot is operating and its challenging client group. As such, the pilot should be the template for any national roll out across Scotland.
15. There are, however, a number of **challenges** that need to be considered and agreed upon prior to a national roll out. These are:
- How to replicate the pilot's Personal Best model in other parts of Scotland.
  - Funding Personal Best.
  - Gaining a commitment from the 2014 Organising Committee to Personal Best.
  - Personal Best's branding in Scotland.
  - Personal Best's gender split.
  - Level of support for volunteers on placement.
  - Personal Best's standing in relation to other volunteering qualifications.
  - Developing progression routes towards Commonwealth Games jobs.
16. If Personal Best is to be continued in Glasgow and rolled out across Scotland (or parts of Scotland), the **recommendations** are that the following components are in place.
1. **Appoint national Personal Best champion** to coordinate the national roll out.
  2. **Develop good practice statement on delivering Personal Best** so that CPPs and organisations interested in Personal Best can learn from the pilot's experiences. The guidance needs to be upfront on all the pilot's inputs and set out the need for:
    - Small, dedicated Personal Best Team.
    - Good quality tutor.
    - Volunteering placements arranged in advance.
    - Balanced gender split.
  3. **Promote Personal Best across Scotland – nationally and locally** through concise marketing information targeted at key individuals with national and local organisations and partnerships. The marketing should aim to sell Personal Best as a cost-effective employability intervention.
  4. **Secure local funding with support from national funders** with CPPs taking the lead in this process.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Personal Best Programme

The Personal Best (PB) programme is an employability initiative targeted at individuals furthest from the labour market which uses volunteering and the 2012 London Olympic Games as an incentive to attract clients to engage with and participate in the programme. Initially developed and piloted in 11 London boroughs before roll out across England in 2009, the PB programme consists of a combination of engagement, advice and guidance, personal development, vocational training, volunteering experience and aftercare.

At its inception, the aim was for the PB programme to engage with 20,000 people disadvantaged from the labour market and progress them towards and into employment, further education or training. Every PB graduate was also guaranteed an interview as a 2012 Games Time Volunteer provided they had started on the PB programme by December 2010. The expectation being that 10% of the 70,000 volunteer places for the Olympic Games would be filled by PB graduates.

### Personal Best Pilot in Scotland

In 2009 a Scottish PB Steering Group was formed with the intention of launching a Scottish pilot to test whether the PB programme could be rolled out across Scotland to help achieve a greater legacy from the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games as part of *On Your Marks...A Games Legacy for Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2009).

The Glasgow PB pilot was launched in August 2010 and will run to autumn 2011. The pilot is delivered on a partnership basis by the Glasgow LRA Network, Jobcentre Plus, John Wheatley College, Glasgow Life and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and managed by Glasgow East Regeneration Agency (GERA).

The **PB pilot's targets** are to support 150 participants from across Glasgow<sup>1</sup>. On completing the programme, the targets are for:

- 80% to gain a volunteer place.
- 40% to enter further education or training.
- 40% to enter employment.

### Evaluation Aims and Objectives

The evaluation was carried out in spring 2011 and has three broad aims:

- To provide a midpoint assessment of pilot performance to date.
- To make recommendations on how delivery can be improved in the pilot's final months.
- To help inform future decisions around a national roll out of the PB programme to address employability legacy issues of the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

The evaluation consisted of interviews with PB pilot staff, delivery partners and stakeholders; a survey, focus groups and case studies of PB participants; analysis of PB programme management information systems data; and value for money comparisons with similar employability interventions. It has been structured into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2: Personal Best Delivery** – sets out how the pilot is delivered and managed.

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<sup>1</sup> The initial target was to support 60 participants but, for no additional funding, it was decided to stretch resources and support 150 participants.

- **Chapter 3: Personal Best Outcomes** – reviews pilot performance against its targets and (where possible) benchmarks performance and value for money against similar programmes.
- **Chapter 4: Participant Feedback** – reports on the findings of the participant survey, focus groups and one-to-one case study interviews.
- **Chapter 5: Stakeholder Feedback** – reports on the findings of the delivery partner and stakeholder consultations.
- **Chapter 6: Looking Forward** – overall assessment of the PB pilot and makes recommendations for its future delivery and potential Scottish roll out.

## 2. PERSONAL BEST DELIVERY

### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of how the Personal Best pilot has been delivered. It first sets out the broad activities involved in its delivery before setting out the organisational structure and then the funding behind the pilot.

### Personal Best Activities

There are a number of different components to the Personal Best pilot and this section provides an overview of these. The key components are:

- Participant engagement/recruitment.
- SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events course.
- Volunteering placements.
- Progression and aftercare.

### **Participant Engagement/Recruitment**

The PB pilot's participant engagement/recruitment activities can be described as involving three broad phases.

- **Phase 1: Engaging Referral Organisations.** To secure referrals, the PB team arranges meetings with potential referral employability organisations. At these meetings, the PB pilot is explained in terms of the activities involved, who it is targeted at (namely Glasgow Works eligible clients) and the targeted outcomes. Where possible, the PB 'pitch' is tailored to each organisation and the clients that they work with. To support the 'pitch', PB marketing resources such as leaflets and posters are provided to each organisation. Organisations are then encouraged to refer clients who are both interested in and eligible for the PB pilot.
- **Phase 2: Introductory Client Phone Call.** When a client is referred, the PB team contact each client referral over the phone to check their eligibility, reiterate what the PB pilot involves and, more generally, confirm that they remain interested in participating in the PB pilot. If still keen to participate, they are then invited to a Group Information Session.
- **Phase 3: Group Information Session.** The final recruitment phase involves potential participants attending a Group Information Session where they are given further information about the PB programme, meet the PB team, and have a chance to meet other potential participants. During the Group Information Session, short interviews are held where attendees are assessed on their suitability and commitment to Personal Best. Based on the outcome of the short assessment, attendees are then offered a place on the course or, if not successful, signposted to another programme or service.

As Figure 2.1 shows, the engagement/recruitment activities have involved for the first 6 cohorts:

- 47 meetings arranged with potential referral organisations. 34 (72%) organisations referred clients and 20 (43%) organisations referred a client who actually started on the PB pilot.
- 312 clients referred in total. 99 (32%) were offered a place on the PB course after the information session and 86 of these actually started.



**Figure 2.1: Referral Activities**

Referring Organisations	Number
Number of meetings with potential referral organisations	47
Number of organisations referring to PB pilot	34*
Number of organisations with a referral starting on PB pilot	20
Participants Referred	
Total number of referrals received	312
Number of telephone questionnaires completed	277
Number invited to information session (29 sessions held in total)	222
Number attending information session	146
Number offered a PB pilot place	99
Number of PB pilot starts	86

Source: Pilot Monitoring System

\* 34 = 25 organisations plus 9 different Jobcentre Plus offices.

### **SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events Course**

The SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events course was designed through discussions of the pilot's delivery partners and built on the model adopted in England. The course, delivered by John Wheatley College, is a 120 hour SQA accredited programme comprising 100 hours taught material and 20 hours mandatory volunteering. It is delivered as a 2 days a week (10am to 3pm) 10 week course because under this structure:

- Two classes can be run each week (one class on Monday and Tuesday; the other on Thursday and Friday) – meaning 30 participants can be taking part at any one time with just one full-time tutor.
- Volunteering placements can more readily be found over 10 weeks than a shorter duration.
- Participants can continue to remain on benefits as they are receiving less than 16 hours per week training.
- Course hours are more likely to fit in with childcare and school hours.

Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the different modules and subject areas covered during the 10 weeks. Volunteering placements are scheduled from week 5 but in practice the placements may arise at any time during the 10 week period.

**Figure 2.2: Personal Best Course Content**

Week	Content
<b>Pre-Course Induction</b>	Course Registration, Disclosure Scotland application and opportunity to meet the PB Course Tutor and PB Team
<b>1: Course Start</b>	Personal Development and Health and Safety training
<b>2</b>	Sporting Events: Volunteering and the Olympics Intermediate 1
<b>3</b>	Sporting Events: Volunteering Experience Intermediate 1
<b>4</b>	Sporting Events: Volunteering Teams Intermediate 1
<b>5</b>	Volunteering Placement
<b>6</b>	Sporting Events: Conflict Resolution Intermediate 1
<b>7</b>	Sporting Events: Customer Care Intermediate 1

8	Sporting Events: Equality and Diversity in Sport Intermediate 1
9	Sporting Events: Safety Awareness Intermediate 1
10	Sporting Events: Accidents and Emergencies Intermediate 1

In addition to the taught content outlined in Figure 2.2, the pilot has built in additional activities to enhance the Personal Best programme. While there have been slight variations in the additional activities delivered across the different groups, each group has received:

- **Presentations on future employment opportunities** from employers and employability organisations.
- **Presentations on future volunteering opportunities** including from the Volunteer Centre, Glasgow Life and Lanarkshire 2011 International Children's Games.
- **Presentations on future training opportunities** and courses.
- **Employability supports** such as interview and presentation skills and attending jobs fairs.
- **Gym membership and inductions** managed and arranged through the East End Healthy Living Centre.

On Wednesdays, participants are also invited to attend an open sports and leisure session. These sessions were being delivered by Celtic Football Club and centred on football coaching but, to offer wider sports and so be more inclusive, Wednesday activities are now run by the Personal Best tutor in a local leisure centre.

### **Volunteering Placements**

As part of the SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events course, participants must complete 20 hours volunteering. The placements are coordinated by the Personal Best team, with a number sourced through Glasgow Life. For the first 4 cohorts, 39 days of volunteering were made available across 12 different events. Placements included:

- Bank of Scotland Great Scottish Run.
- International Gymnastics Grand Prix at Kelvinhall.
- Aviva International Athletics Match at Kelvinhall.
- Glasgow Rocks basketball matches at Kelvinhall.
- Glasgow Loves Christmas.
- Glasgow East Parks Festival.
- Tollcross Park Dog Walk.
- East End Music Festival.

For each event, the host organisation is briefed in advance about the Personal Best programme and the types of volunteering roles suitable for the participants. On the day, a member of the Personal Best team or the Personal Best tutor normally attends to provide support to the volunteers. Feedback is then sought from the host organisation around the volunteers' attendance, their quality and enthusiasm, and any other issues arising. Host organisations interviewed as part of the evaluation were:

- Impressed with the motivation, enthusiasm and skillsets shown by the volunteers.
- Satisfied with the level of feedback that the PB team asks of them about the volunteers.
- Keen to maintain the relationship with the PB team as the pilot provides the host organisation with a useful source of volunteers.

### **Progression and Aftercare**

To support participants' progression into a positive destination after completing the course, the pilot has put in place a number of supports. These additional supports have been instrumental in supporting participants into employment.

- Additional, certificated training courses in Emergency First Aid Training, Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate (both funded and delivered by John Wheatley College) and SIA Door Steward Training and Badge (funded by Glasgow Works and Individual Learning Account monies). Box 2.1 shows that real employment links have been secured as through the SIA Door Steward Training.

#### **Box 2.1: Sustainable Employment in Security**

To support completers' progression into sustainable employment in the security industry, completers who go on to complete the GERA/Glasgow Works-funded SIA Door Supervisor Training are guaranteed an interview with three employers (Group 4, Kingfisher Security and Palmaris). The guaranteed interviews have been co-ordinated by GERA.

- Links to volunteering opportunities through the Volunteer Centre and a number of local voluntary sector projects and organisations.
- Aftercare support from Personal Best staff and the full range of support is outlined in Figure 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.3: Personal Best Pilot Organisational Structure**

<b>Aftercare Support</b>	<b>Descriptor of Aftercare Support Provided</b>
<b>One-to-One Progression Meetings</b>	PB Team discuss with PB participants each individual's progression route (from education, training, volunteering opportunities to employment opportunities) and any additional barriers (e.g. money advice, previous debts, homelessness, previous convictions, health conditions, in work benefit calculations) to agree an action plan of support and facilitate group training and funding opportunities.
<b>Vacancy Information</b>	PB Team produces a weekly distributed document showing current posts, job descriptions, job specifications, method of job application, application timelines, interview dates and start dates.
<b>Application Support</b>	<p>PB Team facilitate all work/volunteer training progression routes supporting clients with application forms and proof of identity for the following workshops :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CV preparation for job advertised.</li> <li>- Understanding the job/volunteer specification.</li> <li>- Interview techniques including core competency based techniques.</li> <li>- Body language coaching.</li> </ul> <p>Where possible, PB Team work with local providers such as Jobcentre Plus, Remploy, Working Links, Reed and Shaw Trust for funding for interview clothes and proof of identity.</p>

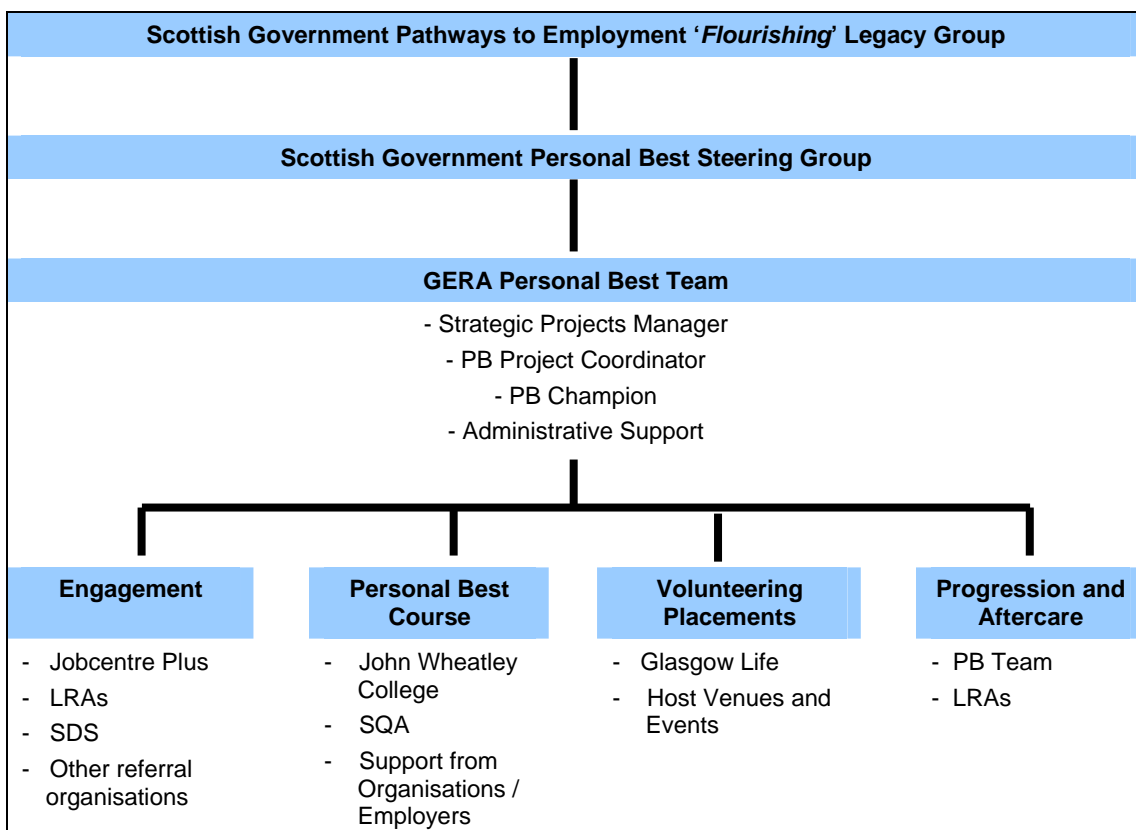
<b>Coordinate Further Education/Training Opportunities</b>	<p>PB Team facilitate all group training progression routes supporting clients with application forms, eligibility, proof of identity, training dates and locations for following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First Aid.</li> <li>- Food and Hygiene.</li> <li>- Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training.</li> <li>- Security Industry Award application and training.</li> <li>- Call centre training.</li> <li>- Administration training.</li> <li>- Catering Level 1 training.</li> </ul> <p>PB Team supports clients to access and fund these training opportunities. For example, by supporting clients to apply for their ILA and negotiating with Glasgow Works to fund SIA badges on completion of SIA training.</p>
<b>Additional In Work Support</b>	<p>PB Team facilitate all in work support such as advice and guidance around current employer/volunteer work situations and further progression opportunities.</p>

A graduation ceremony is planned for participants once they have all completed the course and achieved their SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events. This is likely to be held at the City Chambers, Hampden Park or another high profile venue.

### Personal Best Organisational Structure

This section provides an overview of the organisational structure delivering and supporting the Personal Best Pilot. At its simplest, Figure 2.4 shows that there are four organisational layers to the pilot – from the strategic Scottish Government Pathways to Employment ‘Flourishing’ Legacy Group to the delivery organisations that are coordinated by the GERA Personal Best Team. Each of these layers is discussed below.

**Figure 2.4: Personal Best Pilot Organisational Structure**



### **Scottish Government Pathways to Employment ‘Flourishing’ Legacy Group**

The Pathways to Employment ‘Flourishing’ Legacy group is one of the strategic sub-groups that delivers against *On Your Marks...A Games Legacy for Scotland* (Scottish Government, 2009). The strategy document sets out four legacy themes – *Active, Connected, Sustainable* and *Flourishing* – with the Pathways to Employment Group charged with the *Flourishing* skills and employment strand. Currently the Group is primarily concerned with the skills needs stemming from the Commonwealth Games and the Personal Best pilot. Coordinated by the Scottish Government, it meets approximately every 3 months and has a wide membership that includes the Scottish Government, 2014 Organising Committee, Skills Development Scotland, Jobcentre Plus, Clyde Gateway Urban Regeneration Company (URC), Glasgow City Council, SQA and GERA.

### **Scottish Government Personal Best Steering Group**

Below the Pathways to Employment ‘Flourishing’ Legacy Group, there is a smaller steering group which focuses specifically on Personal Best. Again coordinated by the Scottish Government, it meets approximately every 2 months and its membership includes GERA, John Wheatley College, Jobcentre Plus, Glasgow Life, SQA, Skills Active, Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland. Its purpose is to review the pilot’s progress, discuss and resolve any issues arising and to identify any opportunities that the pilot could build on.

### **GERA Personal Best Team**

At the heart of the pilot is the GERA Personal Best Team. Its role is to oversee and manage every element of the pilot (from engagement through to progression and aftercare), act as the point of contact for any questions from stakeholders, delivery partners and participants, and report progress to the Pathways to Employment ‘Flourishing’ Legacy Group and Personal Best Steering Group. As Figure 2.4 shows the team consists of three staff members and is managed by GERA’s Strategic Projects Manager as one of a portfolio of projects. The team is made up of:

- Personal Best Project Coordinator – full-time role.
- Personal Best Champion – full-time role which supports the Personal Best Project Coordinator.
- Administrative support – currently provided by an apprentice.

### **Delivery Partners – Engagement, Course, Volunteering Placements, and Progression and Aftercare**

The delivery of the different aspects of the PB pilot requires the support and input of a number of partner organisations. The contribution of the different partners involved is outlined below.

- **Engagement.** Figure 2.1 showed that 34 organisations had referred clients to the pilot and the main referral organisations have been Jobcentre Plus, the Glasgow LRA network, Skills Development Scotland and Working Links.
- **Personal Best Course.** John Wheatley College is the main delivery partner as it provides the course tutor and also supervisory and professional support to the tutor. SQA continues to be instrumental in developing the qualification and providing course guidance. The contribution of organisations and employers (such as the Volunteer Centre, PMC Event Management and Glasgow Life’s sport coaching department) has then supported the pilot’s programme of additional activities and presentations.
- **Volunteering Placements.** In practice the GERA Personal Best Team has secured many of the volunteering placements but Glasgow Life has been a key partner in this process. On the day of the volunteering placements, it is the contribution and commitment of the host venues and organisations to Personal Best and its participants that is all important.

- **Progression and Aftercare.** The progression and aftercare support for completers is provided by the GERA Personal Best Team but completers can also access mainstream advisory and aftercare support from their local LRA.

### Personal Best Funding

Figure 2.5 shows that the total cost of the PB pilot to its completion in autumn 2011 will be £196,500 (excluding launch and evaluation costs). Funding, whether direct or in-kind contributions, has been received from:

- Glasgow Works.
- GERA.
- John Wheatley College.
- Scottish Government.
- Other LRAs.

Based on the total PB pilot cost of £196,500, the cost per participant is £1,300.

**Figure 2.5: Total Cost of Personal Best Pilot for 150 Participants**

	Cost
<b>Marketing Costs</b>	£8,000
<b>PB Team and PB Tutor Staffing Costs</b> (including managerial support for posts)	£120,000
<b>Delivery costs</b> (e.g. venue hire, catering, travel expenses)	£56,000
<b>Progression opportunities</b> (e.g. SIA, food hygiene, first aid courses)	£12,500
<b>Total PB Pilot Cost</b>	<b>£196,500</b>

Source: PB Pilot Monitoring System

Note: Excludes Personal Best pilot launch and evaluation costs of £21,000.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the PB pilot's activities, delivery structure and costs. The key messages are:

- There are four broad elements to the PB pilot's activities:
  - Engagement activities – which involve an intensive three stage engagement and recruitment process.
  - SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events course – delivered by John Wheatley College as a 2 day per week, 10 week course.
  - Volunteering placements – participants are required to complete 20 hours volunteering to achieve the qualification.
  - Progression and aftercare support – with opportunities most notably available around SIA, food hygiene and first aid training.
- There are four main layers to the PB's organisational structure:
  - Scottish Government's Pathways to Employment 'Flourishing' Legacy Group.
  - Scottish Government's Personal Best Steering Group.
  - GERA's Personal Best Team.
  - Delivery partners – who contribute to the four broad activities outlined above.
- Total cost of the PB pilot will be £196,500 (excluding launch and evaluation), which equates to £1,300 per participant.

### 3. PERSONAL BEST OUTCOMES

#### Introduction

This chapter summarises the main outcomes of the Personal Best pilot before presenting benchmark data from comparator programmes and projects – including the Personal Best programme in England.

#### Participant Characteristics

At time of evaluation, 117 participants had either completed, currently on or about to start the PB course. Figures 3.1 to 3.3 set out the key characteristics of the participants and reading across these it is clear that the ***Personal Best pilot has been effective at engaging the traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed, male client group.*** Figure 3.1 begins with analysis by age and gender. It shows:

- 76% of participants are male and 24% female, which reflects the gender split in Glasgow of the pilot's target client group.
- 34% of participants are male and aged 41 or above.
- A further 23% of participants are male aged 31 to 40.

**Figure 3.1: PB Pilot Participants by Age and Gender (%)**

Age	Male	Female	Total
16 to 19	4	1	5
20 to 30	15	7	21
31 to 40	23	6	29
41 to 50	26	9	34
50 and over	9	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Pilot Monitoring System; Note: n = 117

Figure 3.2 presents participants' benefit status and again shows the challenging nature of the client group.

- 56% have been claiming JSA for over 6 months and have an additional barrier.
- 26% are claiming Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit.

**Figure 3.2: PB Pilot Participants by Benefit Type (%)**

Benefit Type	Percentage
Employment Support Allowance / Incapacity Benefit	26
Income Support – Sickness	3
Income Support – Lone Parent	7
Jobseekers Allowance – Over 6 Months plus one of following criteria: disability, spent convictions, homelessness, history of substance abuse, history of mental health problems	56
Jobseekers Allowance – Under 6 Months	5
None	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Pilot Monitoring System; Note: n = 117



In terms of length unemployed, Figure 3.3 shows that **three-quarters of the participants are long-term unemployed**.

- 46% have been unemployed for between 1 and 5 years.
- 30% have been unemployed for more than 5 years.

**Figure 3.3: PB Pilot Participants by Duration Unemployed (%)**

Duration Unemployed	Percentage
Less than 6 months	5
6 months to 1 year	19
1 to 3 years	35
3 to 5 years	11
5 years and over	30
Total	100

Source: Pilot Monitoring System; Note: n = 117

To add some realism to Figures 3.1 to 3.3 above, Box 3.1 summarises the backgrounds of the 10 case study interviews carried out with Personal Best participants – and these case studies are further referred to in Chapter 4.

#### Box 3.1: Backgrounds of Personal Best Case Study Interviews

- Robbie, 28, had been unemployed for 2 years and admits he had been an alcoholic for the last 10 years which had seriously impacted on him holding down the kitchen and catering jobs he had had in the past.
- Tom, 47, had been unemployed for two years.
- Daniel, 42, had been out of work for three years before and was currently recovering from a drink problem and staying in a hostel.
- Sean, 51, had been out of work for 8 months.
- Rita, 43, had not worked for 10 years.
- Aaron, 28, had been out of work for two years.
- Mike, 35, had been never worked and has found it especially difficult to get a job because of a previous criminal conviction.
- Martin, 45 from Easterhouse, had been unemployed for 3 years.
- Lisa, 53, had been a nursery nurse but took voluntary redundancy 2 years ago and due to health problems has not worked since then.
- Joe, 26 from Parkhead, was unemployed for 2 years before Personal Best and admits he was “getting lazy”.

#### Course Outcomes

At time of evaluation, four cohorts had completed the 10 week programme and the completion rates are high at 84% – particularly given that the majority of participants are long-term unemployed, have challenging backgrounds and the course is 10 weeks long. Credit here must be given to the course tutor and the Personal Best team for helping to sustain these high rates.

- **56 participants started.**
- **47 (or 84%) completed the 10 week programme.**
  - 32 expected to gain a full qualification.
  - 10 expected to gain a part qualification.
- **9 (or 16%) were early leavers.** Reasons for not completing the course include:
  - Gaining employment while on the course.
  - Accepted onto another course or entering further education.
  - Realising that Personal Best was ‘not right for them’.



- Personal circumstances.

### Participant Destinations

Following the end of the 10 week programme.

- **22 (47% of completers; 39% of starts) have entered employment.**
  - By contract type: 19 were full-time and 3 part-time.
  - Jobs entered are security guard, retail assistants, retail supervisors, cleaners and maintenance staff, community janitor, administrator, painter, mail sorter, and labourer.
  - For 3 of the 22, the first job they entered came to an end (e.g. a seasonal/temporary post) but they have since found another job with the support of the PB team.
- **40 (85% of completers; 71% of starts) have gained a volunteer place.** Organisations that the placements have been with include:
  - Glasgow Furniture Initiative.
  - UNISON conference.
  - Adventure Scotland.
  - St Rollox Church teaching English.
- **25 (53% of completers; 45% of starts) have entered further education or training.** Courses entered are:
  - First Aid Certificate.
  - Food and Hygiene Certificate.
  - Security Industry Authority (SIA) Door Supervisor Training.
  - CISCO Academy.
  - Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Card.
  - Others including hospitality, sports coaching, social care, administration and IT.
- **42 participants registered to become a Games Times Volunteer at the London 2012 Olympics.** The closing deadline for these applications was in December 2010, therefore only 47 programme completers were eligible for registration. Those registered have been invited to a selection interview at the Glasgow Science Centre in May 2011.

### Benchmarking

This section sets out the Personal Best pilot's performance in relation to other employability programmes. The most obvious benchmark is with **England's Personal Best programme** and this is presented in Figure 3.4 drawing on reports prepared by SkillsActive. While there may be some weaknesses in England's monitoring information, it shows:

- **Enrolments** – The pilot attracts a much higher proportion of male participants than England's programme, which reflects the composition of Glasgow's workless population. By age, the limited benchmarks that can be made indicate that the Scottish pilot attracts a larger cohort aged 25 or over.
- **Completion/Achievement Rates** – The pilot has a far higher completion rate than England's programme: 84% v. 60%.
- **Destinations** – The pilot has achieved far stronger outcomes than England's programme. For example, 47% have entered employment compared with 5% in England.
- **Games Time Volunteer Registrations** – Through the support of the PB Team, 89% of the eligible 47 completers registered to be a Games Time Volunteer. In contrast, 1,107 or 28% of the 4,000 eligible completers in England registered to be a Games Time Volunteer.

**Figure 3.4: Benchmarking Against Personal Best in England**

	Scottish Pilot	Personal Best in England
<b>Enrolments</b>		
Total Enrolments	117	8,376
% Male	76%	49%
% Female	24%	51%
% Under 19	5%	5%
% 19 to 24	9%	19%
% 25 to 59	86%	77%
% Over 60	0%	2%
<b>Course Completions</b>		
Completion Rate of Enrolments	84%	60%
Achievements/Qualification as % of Completers	89%	88%
<b>Destinations of Completers</b>		
Into Employment	47%	5%
Into Further Education or Training	53%	15%
Into Volunteering	85%	4%
<b>Games Time Volunteer Registration</b>		
Games Time Volunteer registrations (% eligible participants)	89%	28%

Looking back to the **Manchester Commonwealth Games and the Pre-Volunteer Programme** that ran there, the Commonwealth Games Benefits Study (Faber Maunsell and Roger Tym & Partners, 2004) state that:

- 6,250 people enrolled on the Pre-Volunteer Programme.
- 2,250 (36%) achieved a NVQ Level 1 qualification.
- 160 (3%) entered employment.

Again, the PB pilot significantly exceeds the outcomes achieved in Manchester based on these figures.

### Benchmarking with Other Programmes

The PB pilot has achieved stronger outcomes than its England counterpart but it is also important to compare its performance against other employability programmes. There are two key measures to consider here:

- Job entry rate – which is 47% of completers.
- Cost per job – which is £2,800 (on premise that 47% of the 150 participants enter employment).

Figure 3.5 sets out the job entry rates and cost per job figures for national employability programmes, where data are available. Against these programmes, the PB pilot compares very strongly with good job entry rates and a competitive cost per job figure. Again this is particularly impressive given the nature of the PB pilot's client group.

**Figure 3.5: Job Entry Rates and Cost per Job Figures for Comparator Employability Programmes**

	Date of Data Available	Job Entry Rate	Cost per Job
<b>New Deal for Young People</b>	2005/06	33%	£2,619
<b>New Deal 25plus</b>	2005/06	28%	£3,532
<b>Employment Zone NDYP</b>	2005/06	NA	£4,283
<b>Employment Zone ND25+</b>	2005/06	NA	£4,688
<b>Future Jobs Fund (7 months after FJF start)</b>	2010	50%	£10,000+
<b>Training for Work</b>	2010/11	54%	NA
<b>Personal Best Pilot</b>			
	2010/11	47%	£2,800

Source: Skills Development Scotland *National Training Programme Statistics*; House of Commons Work & Pensions Committee. *Inquiry Into Commissioning Flexible New Deal* (2009)

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarised the PB pilot's main outcomes.

- Three-quarters of participants had been unemployed for at least one year and many are male. This means that the pilot has been effective at engaging the traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed, male client group.
- 84% of starts have completed the 10 week course.
- 47% of completers have entered employment, which is very high considering that the majority of participants are long-term unemployed.
- The pilot's outcomes have been better than those achieved by England's Personal Best programme.
- The pilot's job entry rate of 47% and cost per job of £2,800 compares extremely favourably with national employability programmes given the nature of the PB pilot's client group.

## 4. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the views of Personal Best participants – both completers and those still on the programme. Their views were captured through three approaches:

- A survey of Personal Best participants – with 50 surveys completed of the 86 participants who had either completed or were currently on the PB course at the time of the evaluation.
- 10 in-depth case study interviews with participants who had completed the course – and these are attached in the Case Study Appendix.
- 2 focus groups with participants currently on the course at the time of the evaluation.

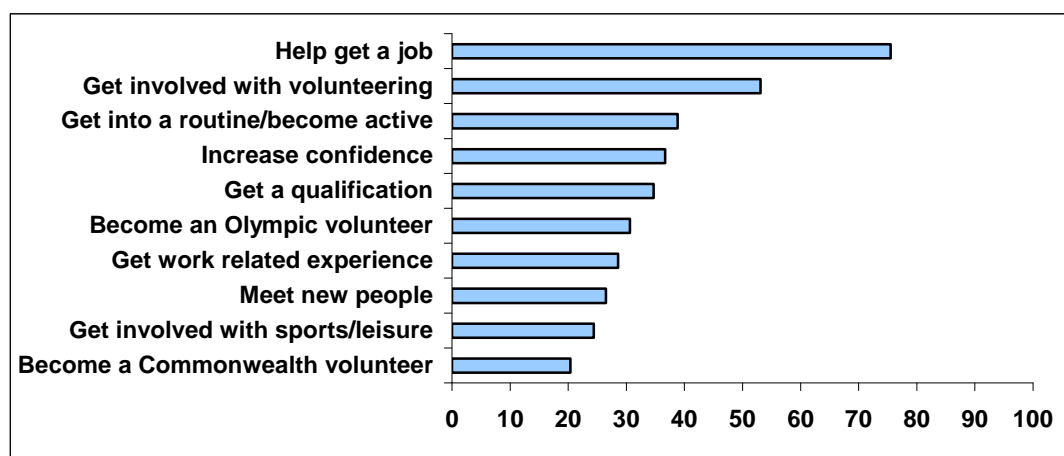
### Reasons for Starting Personal Best

Participants were first asked what attracted them to participate in Personal Best. Figure 4.1 sets out the results from the survey undertaken, with these views consistent with the interviews and focus groups.

- 76% stated that they got involved with Personal Best to help them get a job.
- 53% stated that the opportunity to volunteer was important. During the interviews and focus groups, many participants explained how they saw volunteering as a useful way of gaining experience and putting something positive on their CVs to help them get a job.
- Softer factors were also important – e.g. to get into a routine and ‘get out of the house’ (as many had been long-term unemployed) and to build up their confidence.
- The opportunity to be a volunteer at the Olympic Games was a motivating factor for just 31%. Many simply did not see volunteering at the Olympic Games as a feasible option for them given costs of transport and accommodation. The Olympics also seemed a long way away for them – both in terms of distance and time.

Overall, the main motivations to engage with Personal Best were employability and volunteering related rather than the Olympic Games and sports and leisure.

**Figure 4.1: Reasons for Participation in Personal Best (% of Respondents)**



Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Note: Multiple responses

#### Box 4.1: Case Study Examples of Reasons for Starting Personal Best

- Tom was interested in the opportunity that Personal Best gave him to get a qualification, do some volunteering and viewed it as “the first step on the ladder” back into work. He also saw it as a challenge to himself – to see if he could finish it.
- Rita was not particularly interested in Personal Best based on the initial information she was given, as she had the impression that it would be all about sport. However, she was persuaded to find out more about the programme and the Personal Best team phoned her to explain the programme in a lot more detail. At this stage she found out about the volunteering aspect and thought it made the course “a bit different to others”.
- Aaron thought Personal Best sounded more interesting than “the same old courses” that Jobcentre Plus often send people on. He came for an initial meeting with PB staff who explained a lot more about it and started Personal Best because he was interested in getting involved with volunteering as his girlfriend’s son attends a youth group and he thought it would be good to “give something back”
- Robbie heard about Personal Best through his Jobcentre Plus adviser and was interested in it for a number of reasons. First, he was curious to find out more about the course and what sporting events actually involved. Second, he saw it as an opportunity to get a new qualification. Third, and most important, Robbie saw Personal Best as the motivation he needed to stop drinking. He knew that to complete the 10 week course that he would have to stop drinking before it started (and he stopped 2 weeks before) and not drink during the course. Having been one of the first cohort, Robbie has not had a drink for 9 months.

### Views of the Course Itself

#### Structure

Clients were asked for their views on the structure of the course and the location of the teaching. As Figure 4.2 shows, the survey responses were overwhelmingly positive.

- 80% were very satisfied or satisfied with the course’s 10 week duration. Wider feedback found that none found it too long; rather some thought there might be an opportunity to extent it to include a more advanced level.
- 86% were very satisfied or satisfied with the two days a week timetable as this gave them an opportunity to do other things – for example to look for work. However, some clients felt that if the course was run over more days it would help them to get into more of a routine.
- 92% were very satisfied or satisfied with the daily 10am to 3pm timetable. It was not felt to be too demanding and enabled the course to fit in with any childcare and schooling arrangements.
- 98% were very satisfied or satisfied with the location of the course – which has been delivered in the East End Healthy Living Centre, John Wheatley College and the Adelphi Centre to make it accessible to participants.

Figure 4.2: Satisfaction with Structure of Personal Best (% of Respondents)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
10 Week Duration	34	46	11	9	0
2 Days per Week	35	51	8	4	2
10am–3pm Timetable	43	49	8	0	0
Location	59	39	0	2	0

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

### **Classroom Teaching**

Participants were asked for their views of the classroom teaching that they received on their two days a week. Figure 4.3 shows that feedback was again overwhelmingly positive.

- 92% were very satisfied or satisfied with the course content and, across the different modules taught, participants found the module on volunteering most valuable. The first cohort did note that the materials were not fully developed at that stage and that that material was sometimes “rushed through” but this was recognised and since addressed by the course tutor.
- 84% were very satisfied or satisfied with the course assessment. A number found the thought of course assessment daunting – particularly those facing issues such as dyslexia – but they were impressed with the preparation and support available to help them before and during the assessment.
- 100% were very satisfied or satisfied with the course tutor. In particular, they felt that the tutor made the course interesting, used real-life examples well to support the teaching, and was able to foster a relaxed and informal atmosphere in the classroom that encouraged class discussion and participation. Many favourably found that the Personal Best course was completely different to the classroom experience of “being back at school”.

#### **Box 4.2: Case Study Views on Course**

- Daniel found the course to be of great value. Particular modules that he found useful included health and safety, because “the regulation changes so often that when you are not in work you can’t keep up with them”, and conflict resolution, as this was something that was likely to be needed in the type of work that he was looking for.
- Lisa really enjoyed the course as it was not just classroom based or sports based. Overall, she found it had good variety with the different modules and felt the class size of 15 participants was just right as this meant all could contribute
- Joe liked the fact that the course was not just classroom work but also involved activities and the opportunity to share and learn from each other’s experiences. In terms of the rest of the participants, he said it took a while to get to know everyone and “for everyone to open up but by the end it was really good”.

**Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with Content of Personal Best (% of Respondents)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
<b>Course Content</b>	45	47	8	0	0
<b>Assessment</b>	29	55	16	0	0
<b>Course Tutor</b>	67	33	0	0	0

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

### **Contributions from Other Organisations**

As Chapter 2 outlined, the course also included a programme of additional activities and presentations delivered by partner organisations. As Figure 4.4 shows, 78% of participants were very satisfied or satisfied with these. In terms of the additional activities that participants reflected on:

- *Presentations from employers* – these were well received as it brought credibility to Personal Best and participants liked being able to ask them questions. However, some would have appreciated presentations from employers other than security firms, while some felt the employers focused too much on selling their business.

- *Presentations from volunteering organisations* – there were mixed views on these but those who were interested in future volunteering found the presentations helpful.
- *Jobs Fairs* – some classes attended jobs fairs which were seen as a good opportunity but in reality too busy and rushed to get maximum benefit from them.

**Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with Additional Activities/Presentations (% of Participants)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
<b>Additional Activities / Presentations</b>	17	61	22	0	0

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Beyond the specific elements of the course, participants were asked to reflect on what they found as the best and worst things about the two days a week that they spent on the course. In terms of the best things, the most common responses were:

- Being part of a group.
- Gaining confidence through the classroom discussions.
- Meeting new people and making friends through the programme.
- Getting access to computers as part of the course as many had little or no experience of using computers.
- Using the course as a milestone – e.g. to stay off alcohol.

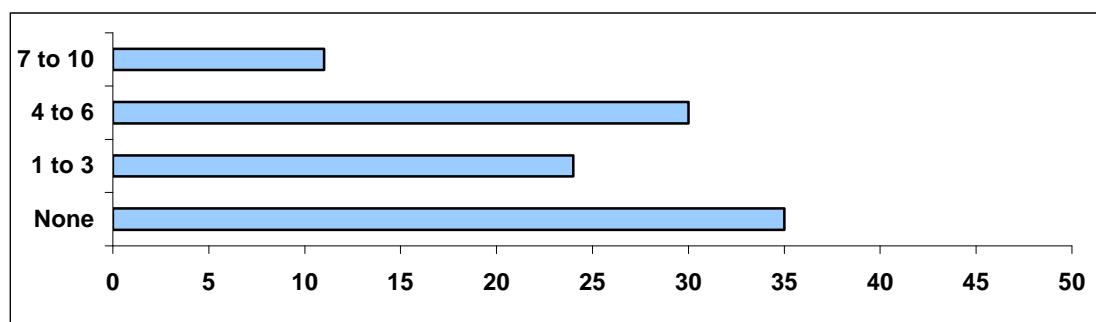
Very few clients had any negative comments about the course and, where they did, these tended to concentrate on their concerns prior to joining the course. For example, some felt apprehensive about the course and were unsure of what exactly to expect. However, one female client did say she felt uncomfortable with the course being overwhelmingly male.

### **Views on Wednesday's Sport and Leisure Activities**

On Wednesdays, an open sport and leisure session is available to all participants. This was first run as a football coaching session by Celtic Football Club but has more recently been run as an all-sports sporting session in the Gorbals Leisure Centre. Across the 10 weeks, Figure 4.5 shows that 65% of participants surveyed attended at least one session and 44% attended at least four sessions. Reasons given for not attending more regularly or at all included:

- Health problems.
- Lack of interest in sport and exercise.
- Too football focussed.
- Clashes with attendance at Jobcentre Plus or other commitments.



**Figure 4.5: Number of Times Attended Wednesday Activities (% of Participants)**

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Of those that did attend the Wednesday session, Figure 4.6 shows that 79% were very satisfied or satisfied. There was no clear difference between satisfaction with the football sessions delivered by Celtic Football Club compared with the all-sports sessions. However, there is likely to be an element of self-selection here as those who do not like football would not have attended the football sessions and thereby not answered this question.

**Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with Sport and Leisure Activities (% of Participants)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
<b>Sport/Leisure Activities</b>	31	48	14	3	3

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

### Volunteering Placements

The SCQF Level 4 in Sports Events requires participants to complete 20 hours of volunteering and, as Figure 4.1 showed, volunteering was a motivating factor for many people starting the programme. Figure 4.7 shows participants' views on different aspects of the volunteering placements. In general, feedback was broadly positive but there were negative experiences reported – and these are outlined below.

- 61% were very satisfied or satisfied with the number of placements available. While this would appear relatively low, it is important to reiterate that the PB team did coordinate 39 days of volunteering across 12 different events for the first 4 cohorts.
- 68% were very satisfied or satisfied with the variety of placements available. While accepting that Personal Best is a sports events-related programme, some would have liked the opportunity to volunteer in youth groups, local community groups and to volunteer with children. Two participants felt they could have volunteered their trades (e.g. painting and decorating) to a good cause.
- 75% were very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of information given prior to placements. This is the highest satisfaction level around volunteering and reflects the level of information given by the Personal Best team and course tutor. It is important that the level of information and preparation provided prior to events is of a high standard as for many participants, this will be the first time they have volunteered and volunteering can be both an enjoyable and challenging experience. For example, events often attract large (even overwhelming) numbers of people and involve dealing with a number of



unexpected issues and difficulties. In short, participants need to expect the unexpected.

- 47% were very satisfied or satisfied with the organisation of the placements on the day. Negative examples given include being told to turn up at the wrong time, not being treated as an equal by the organisers, not being clear or instructed on what to do and not being given sufficient information to inform the public. Again, it is important that participants are sufficiently prepared in advance to appreciate that events may not run smoothly and that the organisers may not have the time to fully address any difficulties they encounter on the day.
- 69% were very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of work involved when on placements. Wider feedback indicates that participants found some placements dull, repetitive and involving a lot of 'just standing around', while others did not enjoy the amount of time spent shovelling snow at 'Glasgow Loves Christmas' event in George Square.
- 42% were very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of feedback received about the placements. Wider feedback indicates that any feedback received was generally for the group as a whole rather than personalised.

**Figure 4.7: Satisfaction with Volunteering Placements**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Number of placements	27	34	32	7	0
Variety of placements	28	40	30	3	0
Information prior to placements	24	51	17	7	2
Organisation on the day	10	37	29	20	5
Amount of work on the day	10	59	15	17	0
Feedback received	9	33	36	18	3

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Participants generally enjoyed the placements and 78% said they would consider volunteering in the future – although several did stress that it would have to be something that they were interested in and enjoyed. This is a notable outcome given that only 24% had ever done volunteering before starting Personal Best. In terms of what they most enjoyed about the volunteering, the most common responses were:

- Feeling that you are helping people and 'giving something back'.
- Getting out and meeting new people.
- Working as part of a team – often alongside fellow Personal Best participants.
- Experiencing events and venues that participants had previously considered 'not for us'.
- Gaining experience that might help them to get a job.
- In some cases, receiving free tickets to events for friends and family.

#### Box 4.3: Case Study Views on Volunteering Placements

- Tom completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Glasgow Winterfest in George Square and enjoyed the feeling that he was “doing something useful” and helping people out. He also liked talking to the public and being part of a team, feeling that he got on well with his fellow volunteers.
- Sean enjoyed the volunteering experience as he met new people and “was doing something useful”. He felt that it gave people like him “the opportunity to use their life skills” and for others the volunteering helped to “bring people out of their shells” and to give them some responsibility and pride, as they all wanted to do a good job.
- Mike found it “just good to be getting out and doing something” while also gaining experience that might help him to find employment and to be able to demonstrate to employers that he “really wants to work”.
- Robbie really enjoyed the volunteering because the events had “a good buzz” and “you felt good seeing all these people and children enjoying themselves”.

#### After Personal Best

All participants surveyed were asked about the **advice and support** they had received from the Personal Best about what to do after the course. 89% were very satisfied or satisfied with the advice and support that they received. Wider feedback backed this up, with most clients extremely positive about the support that they got from Personal Best staff with completers saying that they are regularly contacted by the Personal Best team about jobs, training and volunteering opportunities.

**Figure 4.8: Satisfaction with Progression and Aftercare Advice and Support (% of Respondents)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
<b>Progression and Support Advice</b>	54	35	7	0	0

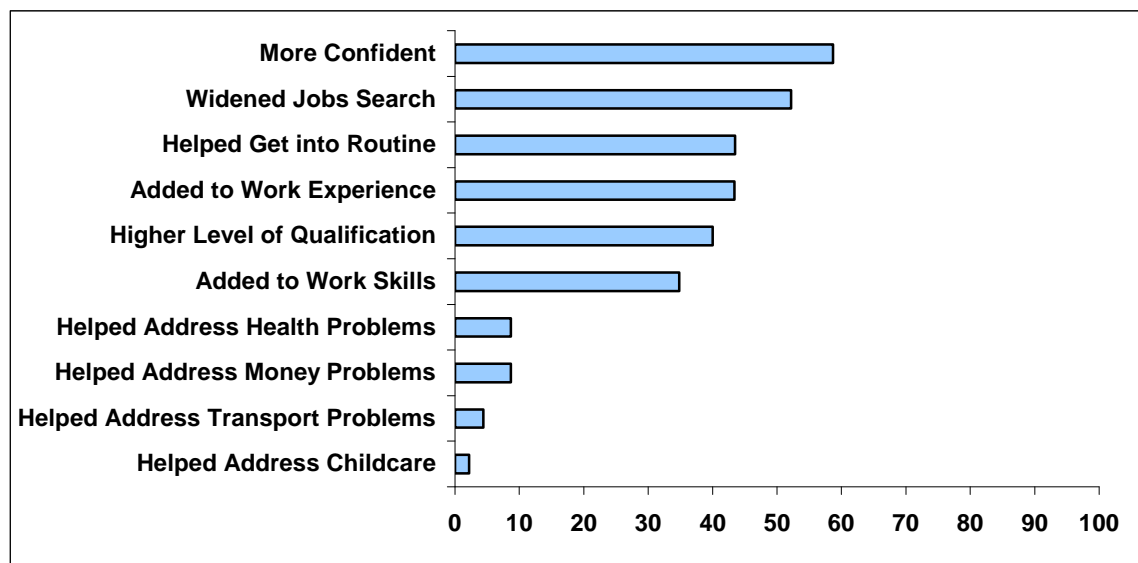
Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Note: 7% stated that they had not received any progression and aftercare support or advice.

The survey then asked whether respondents thought their participation on Personal Best would make it easier for them to find a job. **82% thought Personal Best would make it easier for them to find a job** – and Figure 4.9 gives the reasons why.

- 59% of participants felt they were now more confident.
- 52% of participants had widened their job search as a result of Personal Best.
- 44% of participants were now into a steady daily routine as a result of Personal Best.
- 43% of participants felt they now have more work experience; and a further 35% felt they now had enhanced work skills.

**Figure 4.9: Ease of Finding a Job through Personal Best (% of Respondents)**



Source: Personal Best Client Survey

Note: Multiple responses

In addition, a number of completers had progressed to complete certificated training courses in Emergency First Aid Training, Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate and SIA Door Steward Training. These participants found these certificates to be of real benefit because they:

- Provided them with new skills and qualifications.
- Enhanced their CVs.
- Kept them active and motivated after completing Personal Best.

#### Overall Impressions of Personal Best

To conclude the survey, participants were asked to rate how they had found Personal Best overall. As Figure 4.10 shows, 96% said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the programme.

**Figure 4.10: Overall Satisfaction with Personal Best (% of Respondents)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall Impressions	59	37	4	0	0

Source: Personal Best Client Survey

#### Box 4.4: Case Study Views on Personal Best and their Next Steps

- Martin feels completing Personal Best has made it easier for him to get a job in the future as “it has helped get me on the right road”. For example it has got him into a better daily routine and also increased his confidence. After Personal Best, Martin completed the First Aid, food hygiene and SIA training that was on offer and appreciates the continued support he receives from the PB team – noting that they are good in “keeping you in the loop” with opportunities and also “putting you in touch with people”.
- Lisa feels Personal Best will help her get a job as she sees it as “the start of something rather than the end” due to the confidence and motivation she has got from it.

- Robbie thinks Personal Best has “had a massive impact on me as it was vital for me to do something like Personal Best at that stage of my life”. It has made him more confident, “helped me get back on the right track and helped me to stop drinking”.

Few suggested any improvements or changes they would make but those that did centred around the volunteering placements. This is consistent with the survey’s findings as the scores were least positive here. The improvements suggested were:

- Better organisation of events for volunteering placements.
- Wider variety of volunteering placements on offer – with the opportunity to try out different types of volunteering.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter summarises the feedback from Personal Best participants. Overall the feedback is very positive with 96% either very satisfied or satisfied with the programme and 82% felt it would help them get a job.

- 76% started Personal Best to help them get a job.
- 92% were very satisfied or satisfied with the course content – and the quality of the tutor is central to this.
- The additional activities – e.g. presentations and sporting sessions – were appreciated but were largely viewed as extras to the core course content.
- The vast majority of participants enjoyed their volunteering placements but some were dissatisfied with the range of placements available and the organisation on the day at some events.

## 5. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the views of Personal Best's key stakeholders on how the PB pilot has performed. The majority of those interviewed sit on the Scottish Government Pathways to Employment '*Flourishing*' Legacy Group steering group and/or the Scottish Government Personal Best Steering group. However, organisations involved in the delivery of the pilot along with wider stakeholders (e.g. individuals involved in England's Personal Best programme) were also interviewed.

The chapter begins by setting out stakeholders' views around the:

- Purpose of Personal Best.
- Delivery and content of the Personal Best pilot.

It concludes by setting out the key lessons that can be learned from England's Personal Best programme and considering whether the pilot has learned from these.

### Purpose of Personal Best

Stakeholders were asked how they broadly viewed Personal Best in terms of its purpose and where it best fits along the employability pathway. Overall, stakeholders felt it had two related purposes as an **engagement tool** and as an **employability programme**. These are discussed below.

Personal Best is an effective **engagement tool** because the offer of sports, volunteering and the Olympic Games makes it stand out from other employability programmes. Stakeholders said that Personal Best appears 'exciting', 'different' and 'a good thing to sell to clients'. For referral organisations, they also noted that these hooks were supported by clear, up front information from the PB team on what the pilot involves in terms of the course, qualification, volunteering opportunities and wider supports available.

The combination of these different elements has enabled Personal Best to engage traditionally hard to reach clients – most notably long-term unemployed and economically inactive males as Chapter 3 showed. For some stakeholders, this was a key strength of the pilot as engaging with and supporting this challenging client group is a top priority for Glasgow. However, some stakeholders did question whether the pilot in its current form is attractive to women and young people.

Most stakeholders recognised that first and foremost Personal Best is an **employability programme** designed to engage disadvantaged clients and progress them towards and into employment. In short, entering employment is the most important outcome; other outcomes such as future volunteering and becoming a Games Time Volunteer are additional outcomes – albeit very positive additional outcomes. As an employability programme, stakeholders recognised that clients enhanced their employability through enhanced skills, confidence, volunteering experience and a qualification. Other aspects stakeholders noted were that clients have developed a routine and shown commitment and determination to complete a 10 week course and volunteer on weekends, have enhanced their team working and social skills by working as a group, and have been taken out of their comfort zone in doing their volunteering.

However, while the majority of stakeholders viewed Personal Best as an employability programme, some viewed Personal Best as a means of:

- Increasing the number of active volunteers – and also volunteers from non-traditional sources.

- Re-engaging people back into further education or training.

This is a positive feature of Personal Best and the targets set reflect its contribution to these different destinations – i.e. as a platform into employment, education or volunteering. However, if it is to be rolled out nationally, all partners involved need to be clear on what its primary focus is.

### **Delivery and Content of Personal Best Pilot**

Turning to the workings of the Personal Best pilot, there are five broad elements to discuss. These are:

- Recruitment process.
- Course.
- Volunteering placements.
- Progression routes.
- Pilot's management and coordination.

#### **Recruitment Process**

In general stakeholders felt the recruitment and referral processes set out in Chapter 2 worked well. All of the referral organisations interviewed noted the time, effort, resources and enthusiasm of the PB team in trying to ensure a good quality and quantity of referrals were received. As a result of the PB team's efforts, referral organisations felt they understood and could sell Personal Best to clients, but also knew that they could turn to the PB team if they had any further questions. Referral organisations also felt the phased approach to recruitment (i.e. referral, follow up phone call and then Information Session) helped ensure clients fully understood the programme before finally committing to it. The low drop out rate reflects these efforts.

However, while not disputing the time, effort, resources and enthusiasm put in, some stakeholders did raise the following issues.

- **Need to ensure right message is conveyed.** Stakeholders felt it important to ensure that referral organisations relay all the different aspects of Personal Best to potential clients rather than simply talking about it as a 'sports programme'. The danger being that a 'sports programme' may put some individuals (particularly females) off from engaging with it.
- **Large amount of time and resources committed to client engagement.** Stakeholders were all impressed by the efforts put in by the PB team to ensure they are reaching out to the target client group but they did question whether the level of resource could be maintained in the future.

#### **Course**

The 10 week course was generally seen to be of good quality – albeit few stakeholders had an in-depth working knowledge of the course and its content. Strengths of the course highlighted were:

- **Length of the course.** 10 weeks was seen to be a good length as 10 weeks requires a firm commitment from participants if they are to complete it – something which prospective employers are likely to look favourably on.
- **Group dynamic.** The stakeholders who had contributed to the course noted the strong group dynamic amongst the classes, which they thought impressive given the backgrounds and lack of confidence many of the participants would have had at the outset.
- **Additional activities.** The integration of employer and organisational presentations into the course schedule offers both variety to the course and an insight into future options that clients could take advantage of after course completion.

- **Sports/leisure activities.** Holding sports and leisure sessions on Wednesdays is a good additional offer for clients and links to the *Healthier Scotland* agenda.

Stakeholders also credited SQA and John Wheatley College for getting the qualification and course in place so quickly.

### **Volunteering Placements**

Few stakeholders had in-depth knowledge of the volunteering placements undertaken but all recognised the merits of volunteering to the clients. Gaining new skills, confidence and work experience, putting course teaching into practice, and meeting and working with new people were amongst the advantages discussed. However, while not disputing the value of volunteering, stakeholders did raise the following issues.

- **Limited variety of volunteering placements.** The placements secured have been events-focused and some stakeholders questioned whether more diverse volunteering placements could be secured – e.g. with local sports/community groups or in the cultural and arts sectors. While the focus should be on events-focused opportunities, and the EventTeam Scotland database could prove a useful tool in helping to match participants with wider opportunities, the SCQF Level 4 in Sporting Events does not restrict the 20 hours volunteering to sports events, so raising the possibility of other volunteering placements. There does, however, need to be an understanding that for some volunteering placements, participants may need to have a Protection of Vulnerable Groups check.
- **Importance of preparing participants before volunteering placements.** As stated in Chapter 4, for many volunteering will be a new experience and one that can be both enjoyable and challenging. Stakeholders therefore emphasised the need for participants to be well prepared for the realities (both good and bad) of events volunteering. To help convey this, stakeholders suggested that a DVD is produced that shows an event from a volunteer's perspective – from setting up for the day, to dealing with large numbers of (potentially irate) people, to the clearing up at its end. The DVD can then be shown during the Personal Best course.
- **Level of support on the day for volunteers.** Some stakeholders questioned whether participants are sufficiently supported when on placement to ensure they are fully briefed and have the support should any problems arise on the day. Given the demands placed on events managers and staff, it was felt that this level of support is beyond the scope of the host organisation. As such, members of the Personal Best team or the course tutor attended to support participants on the day. This is an additional level of resource that ought to be in place.

### **Progression Routes**

The progression opportunities offered through the PB pilot – i.e. the SIA, food hygiene and first aid courses and certificates – combined with the continued support from Personal Best staff and links to employers (notably in the security sector) was welcomed by stakeholders. However, moving forward stakeholders raised the following issues.

- **Greater diversity in employment opportunities.** While strong links have been made with security firms, stakeholders felt stronger links could be made with other employer types – particularly in the tourism and hospitality sector which is likely to see jobs growth from the Commonwealth Games.
- **More advanced qualification.** Some stakeholders, including SQA, see value in a more advanced qualification for Personal Best completers to



progress onto should they wish to. Early indications are that an SCQF Level 5 qualification may be developed.

### ***Pilot's Management and Coordination***

Stakeholders could not fault the Personal Best team as they were widely viewed as committed, enthusiastic and able to keep both partners and participants fully informed of the PB pilot's progress and future opportunities. More widely, stakeholders also highlighted the strength of the partnership between GERA and John Wheatley College as this has helped ensure that course delivery and the wrap-around support to participants is delivered in unison.

### **Learning from England**

England's Personal Best programme, having initially been piloted in London and then rolled out across England prior to the Scottish pilot, has provided the Scottish pilot with an excellent opportunity to learn from England's experiences. This section sets out the key lessons from England before assessing whether these lessons have been learned and embedded with the Scottish pilot.

Box 5.1 sets out the lessons from England. These have been drawn from SkillsActive evaluation reports and consultations with key individuals involved in the design and delivery of England's Personal Best programme. They have been structured under three sub-headings:

- Planning the programme.
- Delivering the programme.
- Reviewing the programme.

#### **Box 5.1: Lessons from England's Personal Best Programme**

##### **Planning the Programme**

These lessons refer to the elements that need to be in place before the programme begins – i.e. what needs to be considered and agreed during its planning stage.

- **Secure funding** – funding needs to be secured at a very early stage. SkillsActive suggest the need for a **central or ring-fenced funding** to support the programme. This is because each English region had to secure its own funding, often from a variety of sources, and the delays in securing a viable funding package meant some regions progressed quicker than others.
- **Agree on programme aims and target groups** – while the aims should be consistent across Personal Best programmes, the target groups of each regional/local programme may differ due to the criteria of different funding streams. Whatever groups are targeted, this information needs to be clearly communicated to referral organisations.
- **Clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders** – it is important that all stakeholders and delivery partners understand their and other partners' roles and responsibilities across the programme.
- **Identify a clear national lead role** – linked to the point above, one partner needs to play a national lead management and coordination role. This should include developing a clear **programme guidance manual** to support the development of the programme across the country. SkillsActive provided this in England.
- **Secure support of Games organising committee** – LOCOG's commitment to the Personal Best programme enhances the credibility of the programme amongst target groups and also local partners.
- **Develop a clear marketing strategy** – to help engage target clients, a clear, branded marketing strategy needs to be in place that all partners can use to promote the programme. If possible, the marketing should include Games branding.
- **Establish referral mechanisms** – all potential referral organisations (and their staff/advisers) need to understand what the Personal Best programme involves (e.g. types of activities and target/eligible client groups) and how clients can be referred to



the programme. For the programme to get up and running quickly, these referral mechanisms need to be agreed from the outset.

### Delivering the Programme

The lessons primarily concerned with the effective delivery of the programme are outlined below – but in reality they should also be considered at the planning stage.

- **Flexible course delivery** – the teaching of the course should be flexible and tailored to meet the individual and group needs of the individuals on each course. The quality of the tutor is critical to this.
- **Course delivery and wrap around support in unison** – training providers delivering the course and organisations providing the ‘wrap around’ support for participants need to work in close partnership to ensure participants’ needs are being met.
- **Progression routes in place** – a next steps strategy should be developed to support programme completers’ progression. Where possible, links should be made with employers such as local sport and leisure employers. Good quality **client tracking** processes should be in place to provide information on the quality and sustainability of different progression routes taken.
- **Establish volunteering placements** – a network and schedule of potential volunteering placement opportunities should be drawn up and commitment to the programme secured with host organisations and venues.
- **Graduation events** – for completers, graduation events should be organised to celebrate their success in front of family, friends and fellow completers.

### Reviewing the Programme

It is important that the programme is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its effective delivery. The key lessons from England are:

- **Performance measurement** – a clear process for collating and evaluating monitoring information needs to be established and maintained to review progress. The results then need to be communicated across partners.
- **Review meetings** – at the regional or local level, regular meetings with delivery organisations need to be in place to review processes and discuss any changes that need to be made.

Reviewing the lessons set out in Box 5.1 against how the Scottish pilot is delivered, it would appear that the Scottish pilot has learned from England’s lessons and integrated these into the pilot. This has not happened by chance as every effort has been made to learn from England’s experiences. For example:

- Key individuals from GERA, Jobcentre Plus, Scottish Government and SQA met with key individuals from England’s Personal Best programme to discuss and learn from England’s experiences.
- Jobcentre Plus’ national Personal Best coordinator was a member of the Scottish Government Personal Best steering group and provided updates on how England’s programme was progressing and the lessons that could be learned.

Nevertheless, it is to the credit of the Scottish pilot that England’s lessons have been learned. Furthermore, the Scottish pilot has then enhanced the programme by integrating additional activities and presentations into the course, offering sport and leisure sessions, and developing progression routes for completers into employment. As a result, **the Scottish pilot is an example of UK Personal Best good practice** and can be used as the template for any national roll out across Scotland.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarised stakeholder views on how the PB pilot has been delivered. The key messages are:

- The PB pilot has been an effective mechanism for engaging with traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed males.

- It is primarily viewed as an employability programme but it also acts as a platform into education, training and volunteering.
- The recruitment process is intensive but has been effective – albeit care needs to be taken to ensure organisations do not simply sell it as a ‘sports programme’.
- The 10 week course is seen as a good length with good quality, diverse content.
- The volunteering opportunities are of real value to participants but there ought to be further consideration on the diversity of placements, the level of participant preparation prior to volunteering and the level of support on the day.
- The progression opportunities are a strength of the pilot but these could be built on further – particularly in terms of looking towards the opportunities from the Commonwealth Games.
- The PB team has managed and coordinated the pilot very well and has worked in strong partnership with John Wheatley College.
- Lessons from England’s Personal Best programme appear to have been learned. Indeed, with the pilot’s additional inputs, the Scottish pilot is an example of UK Personal Best good practice.

## 6. LOOKING FORWARD

### Introduction

The Personal Best (Scottish) pilot is an example of UK Personal Best good practice. It is well coordinated and managed by GERA's PB team, it has a good quality tutor and it draws on a wide range of partner organisations to source referrals, deliver additional activities and provide volunteering placements. Not only is it well delivered but it is also delivering against its targets and significantly exceeding the outcomes of England's Personal Best programme.

- 47% of completers have entered employment; target 40%.
- 53% of completers have entered further education or training; target 40%.
- 85% of completers have engaged in further volunteering; target 80%.

In the economic climate in which the pilot is operating and the challenging client group which it is working with, the employment outcomes are impressive.

Based on the outcomes achieved, there is a strong case for Personal Best to be continued in Glasgow and for it to be rolled out across Scotland (or at least in other parts of the country). Looking forward, this chapter will first consider the potential challenges facing a national roll out, before setting out the key components that need to be in place for a national roll out to take place.

### Challenges facing National Roll Out of Personal Best across Scotland

The Scottish pilot is an example of UK Personal Best good practice and should be used as the template for any national roll out across Scotland. However, there are a number of challenges that need to be fully considered and agreed upon prior to a national roll out. The three critical sets of factors are:

- Replicating the model.
- Funding Personal Best.
- Gaining commitment from 2014 Organising Committee.

These are each discussed in turn and then followed by setting out other factors for consideration in a national roll out.

### *Replicating the Model*

The Scottish pilot has proven to be effective in terms of its delivery and outcomes but a key question is whether the model can be replicated in other parts of Scotland. The consultations flagged up the following uncertainties.

- **Quality of Personal Best Team.** The Personal Best team within GERA is of a very high quality and has dedicated a significant amount of time, effort and resources to make the pilot function as well as it has. Such a high quality team is required to make a success of a pilot but can its quality, along with the management and resources supporting this team, be replicated in other parts of Scotland?
- **Quality of Course Tutor.** A major factor behind the achievements of the pilot has been the quality of the course tutor. The tutor's ability to deliver flexible learning and high course completion rates to a challenging client group is no easy task and requires a specific set of skills and qualities. Can similarly skilled tutors be found in other areas?
- **Range of Volunteering Placements.** To achieve the SCQF L4 in Sporting Events, clients must complete 20 hours of volunteering. Securing these opportunities has (with effort) been possible in Glasgow, although securing placements for a greater volume of participants may not have been possible. This is despite Glasgow having a relatively full calendar of sporting and

tourism events for Personal Best to draw; a calendar which other areas do not have. The questions therefore arising are:

- Can other areas in Scotland secure the number of quality volunteering placements required to fulfil each participants' 20 hours of volunteering – particularly during the winter months?
- If other areas in Scotland can only secure volunteering at local, small-scale events, would these be a sufficient hook for clients to engage with Personal Best?
- **Quality of Partnership Working.** The pilot has worked well because of the strength of both the core delivery partnership (i.e. GERA, John Wheatley College and Jobcentre Plus) but also the partnerships and relationships developed with referral organisations, volunteering organisations and employers. Can this quality of partnership working be replicated elsewhere – particularly as Glasgow has a well-developed employability partnership landscape in comparison to many other areas?

These uncertainties would need to be carefully considered in each local authority area before Personal Best is adopted in other areas. To inform this process, it is important that mechanisms are in place to help ensure that potential delivery organisations from other areas can learn the lessons from the Scottish pilot.

### **Funding Personal Best**

Factoring in project and in-kind contributions, the pilot for 150 participants will have cost £196,500 (excluding launch and evaluation costs). This equates to a cost per head of £1,300 and a (projected) cost per job of £2,800. As Figure 3.5 sets out, this is a very competitive cost per job figure given the long-term unemployed status of many of the participants. However, given the public sector funding climate, this section first considers whether the cost could be trimmed and then considers where future funding could be sourced.

While there are always some cost efficiencies when moving from a pilot programme to delivering an established programme, the evaluation does not believe there is scope to significantly reduce its cost. However, there is the potential to reduce the costs of the PB pilot to some extent through tightening the focus of the PB team and cutting the additional sports and leisure sessions.

- **Engagement – PB team to focus on final selection of participants.** Chapter 2 described the PB pilot's 3-stage engagement and recruitment process. While this has been deemed necessary because it is a new programme, a more cost-effective way of engaging clients is to provide referral organisations with clear marketing and promotional PB material with which they then refer clients to arranged Information Sessions. This does however require firm commitment from the major referral organisations – most notably Jobcentre Plus.
- **Aftercare and Progression – PB team to focus on immediate progression routes.** Chapter 2 described how contact is maintained with all PB pilot completers to help support them towards employment, further education or training, and volunteering. However, this service is in addition to the mainstream employability services provided by Jobcentre Plus and (in Glasgow) the LRA network. To be more cost-effective, the PB team could focus on the initial 3-4 week period after a participant has completed with a series of clear progression opportunities in place, but have an agreed sign-off date when completers are referred back to mainstream services.
- **Cut sports and leisure sessions** – the Wednesday sports and leisure sessions have good intentions and can provide an additional engagement hook for participants but their uptake has generally been low. As such, the

sports and leisure sessions (and associated benefits – e.g. free gym memberships) could be cut, although in reality this may be a very small cost.

The biggest barrier to Personal Best's roll out is how to fund it. Consultations with the Scottish Government, Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland and Big Lottery indicate that there will be **no central or national source of funding for Personal Best**. This means that it is up to individual Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) or individual partners to secure its own funding package if it wishes to deliver Personal Best. This was the situation in England with each region having to source its own funding package to run Personal Best – whether through Learning and Skills Council/Skills Funding Agency monies, ESF monies, and internal partner resources. It is felt that this complex funding landscape did not help the Personal Best programme as a whole.

For Personal Best to be funded, the options appear to be:

- **College funding** – the SCQF Level 4 in Sports Event qualification (to be formally called *Sporting Events: Personal Best* qualification) will be made available by SQA to colleges and other accredited training providers. The *Sporting Events: Personal Best* qualification is made up of 8 units and candidates can complete all units to receive the group award, or take individual units. Recognising the difference between the national roll outs of the qualification versus the programme, colleges have the option of delivering through their Scottish Funding Council monies. The respective roll outs need to be carefully managed with colleges and accredited providers made fully aware of the differences between the qualification and the programme.
- **Funding through Community Planning Partnerships** – many CPPs have local employability strategies, action plans and budgets to help implement these, from internal partner resources and/or ESF monies. In principle, there is nothing to stop CPPs who see value in Personal Best deciding to invest in it, while recognising the constraints and many demands already on their limited employability funds.
- **Skills Development Scotland Funding** – if a CPP has decided to invest in Personal Best and feels a strong commitment to the approach, there is probably scope to discuss with Skills Development Scotland when setting up the annual Service Delivery Agreement whether Get Ready for Work and Training for Work can part fund the delivery.
- **Jobcentre Plus Funding** – Jobcentre Plus under the new welfare to work arrangements have very limited budgets at the district level. However, District Managers have been given a Flexibility Fund to help deliver the Get Britain Working measures. These include supporting volunteering through Working Together, and so in principle again Jobcentre Plus might be persuaded to part fund alongside CPP employability partnerships.
- **Funding through Work Programme Prime Contractors** – the evaluation did not consult with Scotland's Work Programme prime contractors (Ingeus UK Limited and Working Links) who were appointed after the fieldwork had been completed. If a convincing case can be made by a CPP employability partnership around the value of Personal Best in moving people into sustainable employment, there is the possibility of getting prime contractors to part fund local delivery of the model. A particular selling point for the prime contractors will be the fact that these are often very long-term unemployed clients for whom prime contractors receive a premium payment where they are placed into and sustain employment.

If a number of CPPs decided to commit to Personal Best, there would be the option of CPPs working together in groups to bring about efficiency savings. For example:

- CPPs could collaborate to have a single PB team responsible for coordinating delivery across all areas, rather than each having individual PB teams.
- CPPs could collaborate to collectively fund a larger contract to a single provider, which could deliver efficiency savings.

### ***Gaining Commitment of the 2014 Organising Committee***

LOCOG's commitment to a guaranteed interview for all Personal Best graduates in the expectation that 10% of the 70,000 Games Time Volunteers would come through Personal Best was critical to the Personal Best programme. The commitment from LOCOG and the opportunity to use the Olympics 'Inspire' branding helped make Personal Best distinctive as a programme and attractive to potential participants. At the time of the evaluation, the 2014 Organising Committee in Glasgow has not given such a commitment to Personal Best as they are in the process of developing a detailed strategic plan for Volunteer Recruitment.

As it has turned out, England's Personal Best programme has not achieved the outcomes expected – particularly in relation to meeting the 10% of Games Time Volunteers quota as only 1,100 PB graduates registered to become a Games Time Volunteer. This could potentially influence the 2014 Organising Committee's decision on whether to commit to Personal Best. However, for Personal Best to continue and/or be rolled out nationally in Scotland, stakeholders believe that some form of commitment from the 2014 Organising Committee is required. Therefore, in making a decision on Personal Best, the 2014 Organising Committee should consider that:

- While the numbers appear disappointing, 1,100 PB graduates did still register to become Games Times Volunteers. These are individuals who are/were out of work and would have been very unlikely to have considered volunteering at the Olympics without Personal Best.
- Lessons can be learned from England to increase registration rates for the Commonwealth Games volunteering. For example, the registration form could be made more accessible to complete and PB graduates could be made more fully aware of the registration process, timescales and support available to them to complete the forms.

### ***Other Factors to Consider Moving Forward***

In addition to the three critical factors above, a small number of other factors were raised by stakeholders that ought to be considered moving forward.

- ***Personal Best's branding in Scotland.*** Some stakeholders questioned whether Personal Best's branding could be altered so that it reflects the programme's sporting and volunteering elements and/or make it a more distinctive or Scottish product. If changes were to be made to the branding, the danger is that partners are starting from scratch with a new name/branding so requiring a new launch, advertising and awareness raising across referral organisations. A more viable option is to keep the Personal Best branding but refresh the images used with Scottish sporting events and, potentially, images related to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.
- ***Personal Best's gender split.*** The PB pilot has been effective at engaging the traditionally hard to reach long-term unemployed, male client group. This is a strength of the pilot but moving forward, it is important that Personal Best does not become labelled as a 'male' or 'sports' programme. Attracting females to the programme is important as it brings different perspectives to the groups and ensures that the programme can access a wider pool of potential participants, so potentially making it more cost efficient.



- **Level of support for volunteers on placement.** Participant feedback was least positive about the volunteering events' organisation on the day. Linked to this is the level of support and quality of the briefing given to participants. These are all issues that need to be considered to ensure that participants are getting the maximum value, experience and feedback from the volunteering placements. To help prepare participants for the realities (both good and bad) of volunteering, stakeholders suggest that a DVD is produced which shows an event from a volunteer's perspective and that this is shown during the course.
- **Personal Best's standing in relation to other volunteering qualifications.** SQA is in the process of developing other qualifications related to volunteering that will support the up-skilling of volunteers. If Personal Best was to continue, its place in the volunteering qualification landscape needs to be clearly understood and mapped out.
- **Developing progression routes towards Commonwealth Games jobs.** Ensuring that there are progression routes in place for Personal Best completers is critical to the programme's employment outcomes. Moving forward, and as part of the Commonwealth Games legacy, there would appear to be scope to broaden the progression routes currently in place (which are predominantly security focused) to link in with the employment and skills needs of the Commonwealth Games. For example, there would appear to be opportunities to develop links with employers in the hospitality and tourism sectors. The Scottish Government's Pathways to Employment 'Flourishing' Legacy group is well placed to see the linkages here due to its work on the skills needs stemming from the Commonwealth Games.

## Recommendations

Notwithstanding the challenges and factors outlined above, there is a strong case for Personal Best to be continued in Glasgow and for it to be rolled out across Scotland (or parts of Scotland). This section sets out the key components that are recommended for a national roll out.

### 1. Appoint National Personal Best Champion

To coordinate the national roll out, it is recommended that there is a national Personal Best champion in place. In England, such a role was played by SkillsActive and also, to coordinate activities within Jobcentre Plus, by Jobcentre Plus' national Personal Best coordinator. The role of the champion would be to manage the national roll out, lead its promotion, share good practice, and provide support and guidance to any CPPs or organisations that decide to adopt Personal Best. The Personal Best Steering Group would need to decide which organisation the national Personal Best champion best sits and options would include the Scottish Government and Jobcentre Plus.

### 2. Develop Good Practice Statement on Delivering Personal Best

It is important that as much can be learned from the pilot as possible to support other CPPs and organisations in the design and delivery of their Personal Best programmes. A key element of this is for the Personal Best Steering Group to produce a Personal Best good practice statement that is written from the point of view of how Personal Best can best be delivered in other areas. For example, if the decision was taken to fund and deliver Personal Best elsewhere, what key things need to be in place, what (little) things have been critical to the strong outcomes achieved, and what difficulties have had to be overcome? In doing so, it is important to be upfront on all the inputs (including in-kind inputs) that have made the Personal Best pilot a success.

It is proposed that GERA's Personal Team leads on this good practice statement, with it drawing on the Personal Best Programme Guidance Manual developed in England, its own project information and this evaluation. Critical components to be covered include the need for:

- **Small, dedicated Personal Best team** that coordinates the programme locally. As suggested above, CPPs could collaborate to have a single PB team responsible for coordinating delivery across a number of areas, rather than each having individual PB teams. Its main tasks would be:
  - Day-to-day management of Personal Best.
  - Clear point of contact for any enquiries relating to Personal Best.
  - Oversee and manage client referral process.
  - Provide wrap around support to participants when on Personal Best.
  - Coordinate volunteering placements to meet 20 hour requirement.
  - Develop immediate progression route opportunities for completers.
  - Collate monitoring information.
- **Good quality tutor**, with the pilot showing that 1 full-time tutor can teach two classes of c.15 people a week. Key skills and qualities sought are:
  - Volunteering and/or sports background.
  - Good communicator.
  - Ability to deliver course content flexibly and deal with irregular attendance rates.
- **Volunteering placements identified and arranged in advance** of the course starting. The process requires:
  - Clear responsibility for coordinating the volunteer placements – e.g. with the Personal Best team.
  - A schedule of appropriate volunteering opportunities drawn up for the 10 week course and, if possible, the year ahead. The EventTeam Scotland database would be a useful resource here.
  - Firm commitment from host organisations and events to Personal Best, including providing support to participants on the day and feedback on their performance.
- **Balanced gender split** through appropriate referral mechanisms, course design and range of volunteering placements to attract numbers of males and females in line with gender characteristics of target client group.

### **3. Promote Personal Best across Scotland – Nationally and Locally**

To stimulate interest in Personal Best amongst potential funders and delivery organisations across Scotland, there is a need to develop clear Personal Best marketing material and then target this information at national and local authority level organisations and partnerships. The national Personal Best champion would coordinate this process. The three steps are:

- **Develop clear Personal Best marketing information** that sets out the key features of the Personal Best programme. This should be kept short and sharp and **focus on Personal Best being a cost-effective employability intervention**. The Good Practice material developed in Recommendation 2 would then provide additional information if sought. The marketing information should set out the programme's:
  - Activities – e.g. course, volunteering and wider supports.
  - Delivery structure.
  - Partners to involve at a local level.
  - Cost of the programme.
  - Outcomes – including using client case studies (perhaps as a DVD).
  - Value for money.
- **Communicate marketing information to national organisations** to help gain their support (and potentially funding) for Personal Best. Members of the



Personal Best Steering Group would be able to provide key contacts within these national organisations, which would include Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, Scotland's Colleges and the Work Programme prime contractors.

- **Communicate the marketing information across Scotland's 32 CPP areas** because it is at the CPP level that the decision to adopt Personal Best is most likely to be made. The aim would be to target the marketing information to key individuals within each CPP and/or invite them to a Personal Best event involving key speakers from the PB pilot. Key individuals or organisations to target would include:
  - Local authority Legacy Plan leads.
  - Local authority Workforce Plus/employability leads.
  - Colleges.

#### **4. Secure Local Funding with Support from National Funders**

The biggest barrier to Personal Best's roll out would appear to be how to fund it. Given the lack of a national source of funding for Personal Best, the onus is on individual CPPs to put in place their own funding package should they decide to deliver Personal Best locally. However, in addition to monies from local partners, national organisations may be able to support this roll out through co-funding CPP monies. Potential national sources of funding would include Skills Development Scotland, Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme prime contractors. Given the potential difficulties in securing a viable funding package, it is important that the local funding package is put in place at a very early stage and before any detailed discussions about the programme's local design and delivery.

## CASE STUDY APPENDIX

### Case Study 1: Tom

#### Background

Tom, 47, had been unemployed for around two years but looking for work before starting the Personal Best programme. Previously he had done factory and retail work but only part time due to personal circumstances. Tom has also suffered from health problems that made it difficult for him to work for some time.

He was referred to Personal Best by his GERA Advisor at the Shettleston office. He was particularly interested in the opportunity to get a qualification and to do some volunteering. He saw the course as “the first step on the ladder” back into work. He also saw it as a challenge to himself – to see if he could finish it. Tom was also initially interested in volunteering at the London Olympics but he changed his mind when he found out that volunteers would have to arrange their own transport and accommodation. He thought that this would be likely to be very expensive and didn’t think it was fair for volunteers to be left ‘out of pocket’.

#### Experience of Personal Best Course

Tom initially found the course quite daunting as “there was a lot to take in”. However, once he started he found the course interesting and useful – in particular the modules about customer care, health and safety and conflict resolution. He also enjoyed learning about the history of the Olympics. The structure of the course also worked well for Tom as the 2 days a week enabled him to spend time looking for work.

While Tom enjoyed the course, he found the assessment part of the course “nerve-wracking”. Tom has dyslexia and therefore needed extra assistance but he admits that there was always plenty of help on offer. In addition, Tom did not rate the Wednesday sporting activities highly and only attended the sessions twice. He felt that they were focused on football but he is “not interested at all” in football. Instead he made use of the gym at the East End Healthy Living Centre and found this very beneficial to his health and fitness.

#### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Tom had never done any volunteering before Personal Best. He had been involved in work trials in the past where he had done work without pay in an attempt to gain employment but these had never led anywhere and he got the impression that employers were taking advantage of him. This had put him off the idea of voluntary work.

He completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Glasgow Winterfest in George Square and enjoyed the feeling that he was “doing something useful” and helping people out. He also liked talking to the public and being part of a team, feeling that he got on well with his fellow volunteers. His only complaint was that the Winterfest was the only option for volunteering – he would have liked more variety in completing the required 20 hours.

#### Next Steps

Tom feels that completing Personal Best has made it easier for him to get a job – it has helped to put him in touch with more job opportunities, helped him to get into a routine, improved his health, allowed him to gain a qualification that will look good on his CV, and he can get a reference from the PB team or tutor. On completion, Tom also completed the First Aid, food hygiene and SIA training.

He is currently looking for work, either full- or part-time, ideally in retail or another type of work that allows him to interact with people. Another option is to return to Further Education as completing Personal Best has given the confidence to do this and before he was not sure if it was something he would be able to do.

## Case Study 2: Daniel

### Background

Daniel, 42, had been out of work for three years before starting Personal Best and is currently recovering from a drink problem and staying in a hostel. Previously he has worked in pubs, a garage and a bakery. He found out about Personal Best through his GERA advisor in Bridgeton – although the advisor didn't know much about it at the time. Once he found out a bit more about Personal Best, the aspects that most appealed to him were the opportunity to access training for an SIA badge and the possibility of becoming a volunteer at the London Olympics.

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Overall, Daniel was very satisfied with the taught elements of the course. Particular modules that he found useful included health and safety, because "the regulation changes so often that when you are not in work you can't keep up with them", and conflict resolution, as this was something that was likely to be needed in the type of work that he was looking for. He also found the module on equality and diversity interesting as it taught him "a lot of things he didn't know about different religions and cultures".

In terms of its delivery, Daniel felt that the course tutor was very good at explaining things "in a way that you could understand" but, because it was the first time the course had run, the material sometimes felt a little rushed to get through everything in the 10 weeks. In addition, Daniel would have liked more time getting used to using computers, as this was something he had never done before.

In terms of additional activities, Daniel attended a recruitment event at the Glasgow Fort shopping centre but found it busy, noisy and not the time or environment to sit down and fill out application forms properly. Daniel also only attended one of the Wednesday sporting activities because of illness and generally not being very interested in playing sports. For Daniel, the sports activities were not one of the reasons he participated in Personal Best.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Daniel completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run and Urbanathlon. He had not done any formal volunteering before and saw these events as a useful chance to gain experience in the type of job that he would be likely to apply for. He did find the placements useful – particularly the Urbanathlon – but felt that the Great Scottish Run could have been better organised on the day.

### Next Steps

Following on from Personal Best, Daniel completed the Emergency First Aid and SIA training. He feels that these will both be useful for him in finding work and he is currently looking to work in stewarding or security. More generally, Daniel feels that Personal Best is helping him get closer to work and hopes it will help him to move out of his hostel. He has recommended the course to other people in the same situation as him and has passed information about Personal Best onto his support worker.

As an update, since the case study interview, Daniel has secured a community janitors job with Glasgow Regeneration Agency and started the job in April 2011.

### **Case Study 3: Sean**

#### **Background**

Sean, 51, had been out of work for 8 months before starting Personal Best. He had been made redundant from his most recent job but, having worked in a range of jobs since he left school, Sean now finds himself with no qualifications. Sean found out about Personal Best while on an ILA computer course at GERA and thought it sounded interesting and would help him to find work because it led to a qualification. The opportunity to volunteer was also of interest.

#### **Experience of Personal Best Course**

Sean was very happy with the course – particularly the course tutor and the way the course material was taught. For example, he found it not too formal with an atmosphere conducive to learning for people who were not used to classroom teaching. He felt that the best thing about being on Personal Best was the chance to learn new things and interact with the other class members.

In terms of the additional activities, Sean really enjoyed the Wednesday sporting activities. Despite having never played football before, he enjoyed the sessions and saw it as a good incentive to actually get out in the fresh air and improve his fitness. Sean even enjoyed the football despite injuring himself in one of the sessions so causing him to miss some sessions! Aside from the sporting sessions, Sean attended a recruitment event at the Parkhead Forge shopping centre but likened it to “speed dating” as it was too busy and there was too little time to get information about jobs or to fill out application forms.

#### **Experience of Personal Best Volunteering**

Sean completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run. Although he found the event “a bit disorganised”, Sean enjoyed the volunteering experience as it met new people and was doing something useful. He felt that it gave people like him “the opportunity to use their life skills” and for others to “bring people out of their shells” and to give them some responsibility and pride, as they all wanted to do a good job. Sean has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

#### **Next Steps**

Since finishing Personal Best, Sean took advantage of the other training opportunities on offer and completed a first aid course and his SIA badge. He feels that these will both help him to find work. Sean then gained temporary employment over Christmas in the Royal Mail sorting office but he is now once again looking for work and is very pleased with the support that he has received from Personal Best staff. For example, they phone him up to see how he is getting on, let him know about any jobs or training courses that he might be interested in, help him with application forms, Disclosure forms and credit references that are necessary for work in the security industry.

As an update, since the case study interview, Sean has secured a job as a security guard with G4S and is awaiting a date for his induction.

## Case Study 4: Rita

### Background

Rita, 43, had not worked for 10 years before starting Personal Best. She initially heard about Personal Best through her GERA adviser in Easterhouse but was not particularly interested in it based on the initial information she was given. For example, Rita had the impression that it would be all about sport. However, she was persuaded to find out more about the programme and the Personal Best team phoned her to explain the programme in a lot more detail. At this stage she found out about the volunteering aspect and thought it made the course “a bit different to others”. Overall, Rita says the main attraction of Personal Best was the volunteering and having something “to get her out of the house”.

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Rita was initially apprehensive about whether Personal Best would be for her. However, she found that the tutor created an environment that was “not intimidating”, which in turn made the course “really enjoyable” and interesting. In particular, she liked taking part in the class discussions. The course structure and location also fitted in really well for her.

In terms of additional activities, Rita attended several of the Wednesday activities, and enjoyed them – albeit she would have preferred having different sports on offer, as she felt there was too much focus on football. Rita also attended a recruitment event with the class, but did not find this useful due to the jobs on offer being part-time and she would need to work more than 16 hours per week to make it worthwhile.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Rita completed her 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run and Urbanathlon. She enjoyed both of these as she felt they “got you into the spirit of helping people”. Rita did however notice some problems with the organisation on the day of both placements. For example, at the Great Scottish Run she felt “nobody knew what they were meant to be doing”, and at the Urbanathlon “a lot of volunteers never turned up”. Based on her experiences, Rita would be interested in doing more volunteering in the future because “she would just like to help the community”. Rita has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### Next Steps

Since completing Personal Best, Rita got a temporary job (over Christmas and a shorter spell over Valentine’s Day) in a card shop in the Forge Shopping Centre and she found out about this opportunity through Personal Best staff. In addition, Rita has worked towards a first aid at work certificate and SIA badge.

Overall, Rita thinks that being on Personal Best will make it easier for her to find a job in the future because it has increased her confidence and given her some experience that she didn’t have before. She also finds that the PB team “couldn’t have done any more” and “they are constantly phoning with opportunities”.

As an update, since the case study interview, Rita has secured a security job with Kingfisher and is awaiting a start date.

## Case Study 5: Aaron

### Background

Before taking part in Personal Best, Aaron, 28, had been out of work for two years. He had previously worked as a labourer in the construction industry where he had worked on a succession of contracts/projects wherever there was a job available – but these jobs had ‘dried up’ recently.

Aaron was told about Personal Best by his Jobcentre Plus adviser but was not given a lot of information about it initially. Nevertheless, he thought it sounded more interesting than “the same old courses” that Jobcentre Plus often send people on. As a result, he came for an initial meeting with PB staff who explained a lot more about it. Above all, he was interested in getting involved with volunteering as his girlfriend’s son attends youth group and he thought it would be good to “give something back”.

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Aaron really enjoyed the way the course was taught, saying that the tutor was very good and “always kept it interesting”. He particularly liked the informal atmosphere – it was relaxed, “not a teacher-pupil relationship” and the classes were always “a good laugh”. The class debates and discussions around the different subjects that they covered were also good. In terms of the assessment, Aaron did not find it very hard but thought it useful as it made you think about what you had been talking about in class.

In terms of the additional activities, Aaron attended all the Wednesday sports sessions as he likes football and enjoyed them.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Aaron had never done any volunteering before becoming involved with Personal Best. While it was something he was interested in, he did not know how to go about getting involved on his own, or which organisations would be looking for volunteers. Aaron did his 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run and enjoyed it, grateful for the chance to “get out and try something new”. He did find there was some lack of organisation on the day but stressed that the Personal Best staff did the best that they could.

In addition, Aaron has done further volunteering at the Possibilities for East End Kids (PEEK) project. He found this more rewarding because he felt that he was contributing something to the local community. Aaron has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### Next Steps

Aaron is currently still looking for a job, ideally in the same sort of role as he had before in the construction industry, but says it is very hard, blaming the “lack of work out there”. However, after completing Personal Best, he went on to complete training for emergency first aid and an SIA badge, and would consider working in security or stewarding if that type of work became available. Aaron is also continuing to volunteer at PEEK, as and when he is needed.

As an update, since the case study interview, Aaron has secured a production operative job and started his job in April 2011.

## Case Study 6: Mike

### Background

Mike, 35, had never worked before Personal Best and has found it especially difficult to get a job because of a previous criminal conviction. He initially found out about Personal Best through his Jobcentre Plus adviser and was attracted to it by the sport and fitness aspects of the course – particularly the chance to play football and train with coaches from Celtic FC. However, he also admits he would have been willing to do anything structured.

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Mike enjoyed the classroom-based part of the course and was especially positive about the course tutor, who he thought was “very organised” and “made everything seem interesting” as well as providing participants with plenty of assistance and support. In terms of the modules covered, he found the module on equality and diversity especially interesting, as it “opened his eyes to a lot of things” and challenged some of his misconceptions. He also thought the presentations from employers and other organisations were especially useful as they “gave you an idea what they were looking for” and what working or volunteering at events might involve.

A key strength of the course was that, after a couple of participants left in the first couple of weeks, “everyone who was there wanted to be”. Mike also felt that the course could have been longer and/or more than two days a week as it would help participants to get into a routine more like they would have if they managed to find a job.

In terms of additional activities, Mike really enjoyed the Wednesday football sessions and attended as many of the sessions as he could. He thought the promise of football-based activities would be important for encouraging people to get involved with the programme.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Mike had never thought about volunteering before Personal Best. He completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Winterfest in George Square and found it “just good to be getting out and doing something” while also gaining experience that might help him to find employment and to be able to demonstrate to employers that he “really wants to work”. Mike has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### Next Steps

Mike is currently looking for work and is keen to work in the construction industry, as several members of his family do – but is realistic about his prospects of finding a job. Given his previous criminal conviction and his lack of work experience or qualifications, he accepts that he “can’t expect to get the best job”. He is currently waiting for ILA funding to allow him to complete CSCS training, necessary for a job in construction.

Overall, Mike thinks that having done Personal Best will help him to find work because he has gained a qualification, built up his experience and because of the continued support that he has received from the PB team. He feels that because of the help that they have given him, he now has the motivation to get up and do things, and “doesn’t want to let them down”.



## **Case Study 7: Martin**

### **Background**

Martin, 45 from Easterhouse, had been unemployed for 3 years before Personal Best. Previously Martin had worked in construction – mainly on the roads and railways. He heard about Personal Best through his GERA adviser and, having also spoken to the PB team, felt they had “sold it well” by talking about the opportunities that Personal Best could offer and also the chance to volunteer at the Olympics. Martin decided to get involved because he felt it would help him get a job, add an extra qualification and also give him something constructive to do.

### **Experience of Personal Best Course**

Martin had done a barbering course in the past at Central College so was not put off by the course – even so he did not really enjoy the classroom set up despite the course tutor being very good. In terms of the course content, Martin generally enjoyed it but did not feel strongly about any particular module, with the exception of the conflict resolution module which he found different to anything he had done before.

In terms of the additional activities, Martin regularly attended the Wednesday football sessions. He was impressed with the coaches there, despite them being trainee coaches.

### **Experience of Personal Best Volunteering**

Martin had never done any volunteering before Personal Best but he really enjoyed the volunteering he did at the Great Scottish Run and a dog-walkathon. Despite some organisational problems at the Great Scottish Run, he found the volunteering “a good laugh” and found being part of something where people were enjoying themselves to be really satisfying. As a result, Martin would consider volunteering in the future and has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### **Next Steps**

Martin feels completing Personal Best has made it easier for him to get a job in the future as “it has helped get me on the right road”. For example it has got him into a better daily routine and also increased his confidence. After Personal Best, Martin completed the First Aid, food hygiene and SIA training that was on offer and appreciates the continued support he receives from the PB team - noting that they are good in “keeping you in the loop” with opportunities and also “putting you in touch with people”. Martin is currently looking for work and applying for jobs.

## **Case Study 8: Lisa**

### **Background**

Lisa, 53, had been a nursery nurse but took voluntary redundancy 2 years ago and due to health problems has not worked since then. However, she wanted to start working again and got in contact with Jobcentre Plus, A4E and GERA. Of these, GERA offered a better range of options and Lisa was particularly drawn to Personal Best because it was “a bit different”, she liked sports and it gave her a chance to gain some experience in a non-childcare environment. The Olympic Games was also an attraction.

### **Experience of Personal Best Course**

Lisa really enjoyed the course as it was not just classroom based, which “would have been boring”, and also not just sports based. Overall, she really enjoyed the course content because it had good variety with the different modules. Other things she liked about the course was its size of 15 participants as this meant all could contribute and the course tutor, who “put you at ease and you could easily talk to him”.

In terms of additional activities, Lisa attended most of the Wednesday football sessions and really enjoyed them. She admits it could have been awkward because there were only two women at the sessions but the coaches were patient, inclusive and “knew what they were doing”. Since the football sessions, Lisa has started Zumba classes.

### **Experience of Personal Best Volunteering**

Lisa had done some volunteering before but not for 10 years. Her 20 hours volunteering were done at George Square’s Winterfest which was very cold and involved “a lot of shovelling snow”. However, she enjoyed it as you felt part of the team and were meeting and helping members of the public. The experience has encouraged her to volunteer again in the future and she has applied to volunteer at Lanarkshire’s International Children’s Games in Summer 2011 and to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### **Next Steps**

Lisa is currently unemployed but has kept busy. She completed the first aid and food hygiene courses and was about to start on an ICT course. She feels Personal Best will help her get a job as she sees it as “the start of something rather than the end” due to the confidence and motivation she has got from it. She has also found the continued support from the PB team to be helpful in getting to hear about job opportunities.

## Case Study 9: Joe

### Background

Joe, 26 from Parkhead, was unemployed for 2 years before Personal Best. He had previously worked in construction and “had all the tickets” but admits he was “getting lazy”. He was told about Personal Best by his Jobcentre Plus adviser and decided to start it as he thought it would “get me out bed and get me into a routine instead of being lazy”. He was a bit apprehensive at the start because he had not done volunteering before and had previously thought “what’s the point of working when you don’t get paid?”

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Joe enjoyed the course and while he couldn’t remember much about the individual modules found the course tutor to be very good. What Joe found best was that the tutor was able to put over his own sports and volunteering experiences to help explain the content. In addition, the course was not just classroom work but involved activities and the opportunity to share and learn from each other’s experiences. In terms of the rest of the participants, he said it took a while to get to know everyone and “for everyone to open up but by the end it was really good”.

In terms of the additional activities, Joe found the presentation from Glasgow Life to be helpful as they talked about the range of opportunities open to them and also gave the class a list of useful contacts for volunteering – he since registered with the Volunteers Centre. Joe also attended most of the Wednesday football sessions, which he really liked being a Celtic supporter. Aside from the Celtic attraction, he liked the fact that the sessions brought the two classes together and so meeting new people.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Joe completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run and the Dog-walkathon (an event he would never had considered going to before). While he felt the Great Scottish Run could have been better organised, he thought the Dog-walkathon was really well run as they provided a lot of information beforehand and “they asked you what you wanted to do” – with Joe choosing to give out the goody bags. While he had not volunteered before, Joe would volunteer in the future as he really enjoyed meeting new people and has registered to become an Olympic Games Time Volunteer.

### Next Steps

Since finishing Personal Best, Joe completed his SIA, health and safety and First Aid certificates and is currently looking for any work. The PB team has been a real help for Joe as not only are they very responsive to any questions he has but they also arranged some mock interviews for him, as he’d struggled in interviews in the past. Overall, Joe thinks Personal Best will help him get a job as he’s now more confident, more active and in a better routine.

As an update, since the case study interview, Joe has secured a security guard job and started the job in March 2011.

## Case Study 10: Robbie

### Background

Robbie, 28, had been unemployed for 2 years before Personal Best having previously worked in a series of kitchen and catering jobs. However, more importantly, Robbie had been an alcoholic for the last 10 years and this had seriously impacted on him holding down work. He heard about Personal Best through his Jobcentre Plus adviser and he was interested in it for a number of reasons. First, he was curious to find out more about the course and what sporting events actually involved. Second, he saw it as an opportunity to get a new qualification. Third, and most important, Robbie saw Personal Best as the motivation he needed to stop drinking. He knew that to complete the 10 week course that he would have to stop drinking before it started (and he stopped 2 weeks before) and not drink during the course. Having been one of the first cohort, Robbie has not had a drink for 9 months.

### Experience of Personal Best Course

Robbie really enjoyed the course and says he “worked hard for those 10 weeks” and always “looked forward to it because you were learning something new all the time”. He says he liked meeting new people and found the course tutor very good as “he explained everything very well, was down to earth and let you learn at your own pace”. While the assessment was a bit daunting, Robbie did not find it too bad in the end because it was fully “explained to us before we did it”.

In terms of the additional activities, Robbie found the presentations by employers and organisations helpful as they made you aware of other opportunities and also “gave you names and contacts to follow up”. Robbie attended some of the Wednesday football sessions, which he thought were well run as the coaches were good, everyone was involved and there was no age discrimination. Robbie also made use of the free gym membership and appreciated this because “you got advice on what to do on the different machines”. He now says he feels much fitter and has continued to exercise regularly.

### Experience of Personal Best Volunteering

Robbie had never volunteered before and completed his 20 hours volunteering at the Great Scottish Run and the Urbanathlon. While he felt the Great Scottish Run could have been better organised, he really enjoyed the volunteering because the events had “a good buzz” and “you felt good seeing all these people and children enjoying themselves”. Robbie has since volunteered with the Playbusters scheme and has registered to become an Olympics Games Time Volunteer.

### Next Steps

Since finishing Personal Best, Robbie completed First Aid and food hygiene certificates and is currently applying for jobs (that day he had an interview to be a chef at Zizzi's). In addition, Robbie has applied for college courses – with him particularly interested in a hospitality course at Motherwell College. The PB team has been a real help as they have been supportive but also “pushy in a good way”. Overall, Robbie thinks Personal Best has “had a massive impact on me as it was vital for me to do something like Personal Best at that stage of my life”. It has made him more confident, “helped me get back on the right track and helped me to stop drinking”.