

**Evaluation of the Pilot Day and Employment Services
in South Essex**

Final Report

SE-SURG

February 2009

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We hope our report will contribute to the continuing development of services that will enable all service users to achieve the aspirations they have described to us and receive services that meet their individual needs in present day society.

The South Essex Service User Research Group

February 2009

Summary

1. Introduction

Our final report from the evaluation of the day and employment services describes the results obtained from each strand of the study in turn, before drawing conclusions and putting forward recommendations for the future.

2. Stakeholder focus groups

This strand of the evaluation was intended to inform the development of the pilot projects and three detailed reports were therefore provided in June and July 2008. A summary of the recommendations and the response from the pilot projects is provided on pages 9 – 14.

3. Analysis of monitoring information

For most services the data summarised below relate to the period from February to October 2008. Data for Rethink Distribution relate to May and October 2008. For the employment specialist service data relate to the eight months from April to November 2008. Due to problems in the commissioners providing us with project monitoring data we were unable to analyse the goals set and achieved at the community bridge building services.

All *buildings based services* recorded increases in attendance over the pilot period. By October most services had a reasonable age and gender balance but men in their middle years remained in a clear majority at Panorama House. Ethnicity was largely unrecorded at Basildon Mind. There were signs that people from BME groups were beginning to engage with some services, but no one from a BME group was recorded as attending Panorama House. The change in service user profile at Brentwood Mind in terms of age, gender and ethnicity was particularly striking.

Uptake of the *community bridge building* services increased steadily over the pilot period, with a fairly equitable gender and age balance at most services, although a large proportion of service users at Brentwood Mind were male and the small proportion of younger people using the Rise services in February had decreased further by October. People from BME groups were beginning to use some services, with a particularly notable increase at the Rise projects.

Uptake of the two *befriending services* also increased steadily over the study period. Two thirds of service users at both services were female. Around half were in the middle age groups, with the remaining people fairly evenly divided between the younger and older groups. Recording

of ethnicity was patchy at Good Companions but the numbers of people from BME groups recorded rose over the pilot period. At Thurrock Mind, one person of 'other Asian' ethnicity was recorded in February and May, but no one from a non-White BME group was recorded thereafter. Both services recorded a range of other activities.

At the *social enterprises*, uptake increased or remained stable at relatively high levels. At Rethink Graphics and Rethink Distribution the age and gender profile was fairly balanced. At Stepping Stones service users remained predominantly male although the age range was more balanced by October. At Pet Supplies younger people were in the majority in February and the proportion had increased by October. All service users recorded at Rethink Graphics and Rethink Distribution were White. People from BME groups were using the other enterprises but the numbers were small with little evidence of real increases. Recording of goals at the enterprises indicated that service users were being enabled to achieve vocational goals. Data for status following placement indicated that 23 of the 94 people using the enterprises had moved on, mainly to voluntary work or the employment specialist service. Three people had moved into paid work.

A total of 218 people were recorded as using the *employment specialist service* over the eight months April to November. The gender and age profile was well balanced and a higher proportion (5%) were from BME groups than in mental health services more generally. Half (109) were unemployed on referral. By the end of November 2008, 50 service users had been supported into new employment, four had been supported to change their job, 49 had been supported into education and 32 into voluntary work. These are cumulative figures and some service users included in the total of 218 would have been receiving a service for only a short period of time.

4. Outcomes survey

A baseline questionnaire was distributed by projects to people taking up a new service between March and May 2008. Follow up questionnaires were sent directly to those who responded six months later. The survey covered participants' demographic backgrounds, employment education and training, levels of empowerment and social inclusion and satisfaction with services. Space was left for any other comments people wished to add.

182 people returned a baseline questionnaire and 78 people completed the follow up version. Because projects were unhappy with our request that identifiers be used in order to link baseline and follow up questionnaires we are unable to directly compare results for people who returned both questionnaires, limiting the analyses we could carry out and making the outcomes study considerably less robust than

would otherwise have been the case. There were no significant differences between the baseline and follow up samples in terms of demographic variables or the services about which they responded.

There were no significant differences in levels of employment, education and training. The proportion of people in work and mean hours of work decreased slightly. The proportion who were retired and the proportions undertaking voluntary work, education and training increased slightly. The increase in voluntary work was closest to statistical significance.

There were no significant differences in levels of empowerment or social inclusion. Mean empowerment scores decreased slightly while mean social inclusion scores increased slightly.

Participants' ratings on the satisfaction measure were very positive, with all items rated above the mid point on the five point rating scale. Of 59 people who had been using their service before January 2008, 29 (49%) thought the pilot service was meeting their needs better and 22 (37%) thought it was much the same. Only eight people (14%) thought the pilot service was not meeting their needs as well as the previous service.

Thirty nine people added comments to the follow up questionnaire. The great majority were positive but eight people did express concern about reductions in drop in hours and the provision of meals.

5. Discussion

The difficulties experienced in obtaining project monitoring data in a useable form suggest that the monitoring system should be seen as a pilot exercise in itself and reviewed in order to ensure data are useable. That we were unable to link baseline and follow up questionnaires for the outcomes study means that, with the exception of the satisfaction survey, the results have to be treated with considerable caution and do not in themselves provide meaningful guidance. Taken together, however, the three strands of the evaluation do provide evidence of the pilot projects' progress.

All three strands of the evaluation indicate that for the most part the new *day services* were proving successful, with high levels of satisfaction amongst service users. The monitoring data highlight the need for attention to aspects of the service user profile at individual projects, particularly Panorama House. Ongoing efforts are needed to enable a small group of dissatisfied people to meet their needs through the new services or other local services.

The baseline survey raised the question of whether the pilot day services might achieve higher levels of social inclusion at the expense of lower levels of the mutual aid and peer support associated with empowerment. At first sight, the outcome results suggest this might be the case, but the differences were not statistically significant and scores for individual items on the two measures suggest that peer group contact had not decreased.

An increase in the proportion of people reporting that their social life revolved around mental health raises the question of the extent to which community bridge building is enabling people to engage with their local communities as individuals, as opposed to as a member of a service user group.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the extension of *befriending services* is bringing the benefits Good Companions was already achieving to many other people. The two services may wish to consider whether they could engage more men. At Thurrock Mind, the question of how to engage people from BME groups seems important, given that the proportion of people from these groups using mental health services is twice that in other localities

At first sight the decreases in the proportion of people in paid work and in hours worked seem disappointing for the *employment services* but these results do have to be treated with caution for a number of reasons (see page 40). Most significantly, monitoring data from the employment specialist service indicates that 42% of those unemployed on referral had been supported into work, an outcome at the upper end of the range of 12 month outcomes reported in the international literature. These very positive results are unlikely to have been captured in the outcomes survey because delays in establishing employment specialist posts meant only small numbers of people using the service were included in the survey.

The more positive results from the outcomes survey also have to be treated with caution for the same reasons. However, the increase in the proportion of people doing voluntary work did approach statistical significance, and data from both the social enterprises and the employment specialist service support the view that voluntary activity is increasing.

The service user profile at the employment specialist service was well balanced. Individual social enterprises may need to consider aspects of their service user profile.

It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to evaluate business development at the enterprises. However, data from the focus groups and comments from two service users on the outcomes questionnaire

suggest that the role of Stepping Stones in the context of the new day and employment services needs consideration.

The implications of the economic recession and the service developments taking place in primary care also need to be considered in relation to the employment services.

6. Suggestions for further development

1. That commissioners and providers review the project monitoring system to ensure the data collected can be processed for use in supporting service development.
2. That data on ethnicity are systematically collected at all projects and continue to be monitored.
3. That baseline and outcome questionnaires are linked using anonymous identifiers in any further outcome studies.
4. That community bridge building services consider the extent to which people are being supported to engage with their local communities as individuals rather than as groups of service users.
5. That individual services consider ways of ensuring a more equitable service user profile as highlighted by the monitoring data (see pages 43 – 44).
6. That those services where some service users are dissatisfied continue efforts to enable this group to meet their needs through the new services or through other local services such as those for older people.
7. That both befriending services consider whether and how more men might be encouraged to take up their service.
8. That the Thurrock befriending service considers how people from BME groups can be engaged, given the ethnic profile of mental health service users in the locality.
9. That the role of Stepping Stones needs consideration in the context of modernised day and employment services.
10. That the social enterprises consider how to engage BME service users in proportion to their representation within the different localities, and consider other aspects of their service user profiles in light of the monitoring data.

11. That the employment specialist service is maintained and expanded to meet demand as necessary.
12. That employment services monitor the impact of the recession on the local labour market and consider whether changes are needed should the impact be deep and prolonged.
13. That employment services build links with primary care workers in relevant roles in order to identify service gaps, overlaps and ways of working together.

1. Introduction

Following a review of current services and a period of formal consultation regarding proposals for modernisation, new models for day and employment services were piloted in South Essex for one year from February 2008. The South Essex Service User Research Group (SE-SURG) was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the pilot services. The evaluation had three strands:

1. Focus groups with service users and carers, project staff and referrers.
2. Analysis of monitoring information provided by projects to the commissioners.
3. An outcomes survey assessing the impact of the pilot projects on empowerment, social inclusion and satisfaction with services.

Our final report describes the results obtained from each strand of the study in turn, before drawing conclusions and putting forward recommendations for the future.

2. Stakeholder focus groups

This strand of the evaluation was intended to inform the development of the pilot projects and detailed reports were therefore provided in June and July 2008. For this reason a brief summary is presented here.

A total of 12 groups were held with the following participants:

1. Service users/ carers using community bridge builders across South West Essex
2. Service users/ carers using community bridge builders across South East Essex
3. Service users/ carers using building based services across South West Essex
4. Service users/ carers using building based services across South East Essex
5. Community bridge builders from across South Essex
6. Befriending workers from across South Essex
7. Building based workers across South Essex
8. Service users/ carers using employment specialists across South Essex
9. Service users/ carers using social enterprises across South Essex
10. Employment specialists working across South Essex
11. Social enterprise staff from across South Essex
12. Practitioners referring to day and employment services across South Essex

On the basis of the views expressed by services users, carers and staff the overall conclusion was that the pilot services were developing well and were valued by participants. Where day services were concerned, drop-in services were continuing to fulfil a useful function for many service users alongside the new services. The views of these stakeholders resulted in 20 recommendations regarding the further development of services.

For day services these were:

1. It would be worth considering and discussing with service users whether shorter drop-in hours every day would meet people's needs better than closing completely on certain days.
2. Services also need to consider drop-in opening hours in relation to other issues such as medication side effects and transport arrangements.
3. Dialogue needs to continue via the day service steering group and the service user reference group.
4. Services should ensure people have access to accurate information about benefits and work.
5. A day service workers' forum would provide a useful way to share ideas, knowledge and good practice.
6. Community bridge builders' caseloads need to be kept under review.
7. Services should ensure that timetabling information is clear and accessible.
8. Longer term forward planning of closed groups might help in addressing individual service users' circumstances.
9. Questions raised about the age profile of service users need to be explored via the monitoring information and the issue of accessibility of drop-in rooms addressed.
10. Take up by people from Black and minority ethnic groups should be investigated via the monitoring information and ways to increase take up explored if necessary.

Recommendations regarding the employment specialist service were:

1. To assess and continue to monitor fidelity to IPS principles, including caseload size.
2. To periodically audit care plans to ensure vocational plans are in place and service users are aware of these.
3. To facilitate access to IPS training for the employment specialists, with access to further training in skills that can augment IPS as evidence emerges to support this.
4. To explore the potential for a career pathway to recognise training and qualifications.
5. To ensure support arrangements are working well for each employment specialist and that team members can draw on each other as a source of support.

For social enterprises the recommendations were:

1. To establish links with SEEE (Social Enterprise East of England) if these are not already in place.
2. To clarify the position regarding NVQs and other qualifications.
3. To consider building in flexibility to the time limit where a clear case can be made to justify this.
4. To liaise with community bridge builders for the benefit of people using both types of service.
5. To provide service users with clear information about how a period at a social enterprise is intended to benefit them.

Participants in the referrers' group were also largely positive about the new services. A further seven recommendations were put forward following this group:

1. Ongoing efforts are needed on the part of both CMHT staff and day service staff to establish effective joint working with day services.
2. Information about the new services needs to be disseminated widely within the Trust.
3. Boundaries around service use, particularly employment support after discharge, need to be clarified.
4. Information to clarify the referral pathways for day services would also be useful, as would monitoring of waiting times as the services continue to develop.
5. The issue of GPs charging for referral needs to be investigated further and action taken to address this if necessary.
6. The issue of equity of service provision is a matter for ongoing discussion by commissioners.
7. It may be timely to draw and disseminate some provisional conclusions about the likely future direction of services.

Recommendations from across the 12 groups were drawn together by the commissioners with the actions required allocated to the relevant projects. In December 2008, projects were asked to provide a summary of their response. These are collated separately below for day and employment services. Some issues, such as GP charging and the equity of service provision raised by the referrers' group, were a matter mainly for the commissioners and are not included in the analysis of projects' responses.

Response to actions for day services

1. All providers had consulted with service users about drop-in hours, Basildon Mind and Rethink indicating that they continued to do so. At Thurrock Mind consultation had resulted in a change to drop-in hours that had been positively received. Rethink noted

that at their projects service users would like increased hours but there was no evidence of a need for this.

2. Providers continued to encourage service users to attend the reference group. Brentwood Mind noted that this could be difficult because service users doubted that their views would be taken into account.
3. Action related to the possible establishment of a day service worker's forum was attributed to the Steering Group rather than to individual projects, but Basildon Mind and Thurrock Mind did comment positively about the idea, putting forward suggestions for timing and attendance etc. Greater reservations were expressed by Rethink due to staff concerns about resources in terms of time, geographical location and costs.
4. Basildon Mind, Brentwood Mind and Thurrock Mind had arrangements in place for benefits advice to be provided at their premises as well as via signposting to relevant agencies. At the Rethink projects supported signposting formed part of the initial assessment and review process.
5. Basildon Mind did not comment on actions relating to monitoring Bridge Builders' caseloads. Brentwood Mind and Rethink indicated that regular reviews were undertaken. At Thurrock Mind, staff kept a journal recording bridge building activity but routine monitoring of caseload size was not reported.
6. The action relating to the provision of clear timetabling information seemed rather confusing as it related to the provision of information to the commissioners rather than to service users. However, Basildon Mind and Brentwood Mind indicated that timetable information was available to service users. Thurrock Mind explained that a shift towards addressing individual needs meant not all groups were timetabled, although some did take place on a regular basis.
7. Brentwood Mind and Thurrock Mind indicated that closed groups were planned in relation to individual service users' needs. The responses from other providers were difficult to interpret.
8. Basildon Mind did not comment on the monitoring of age and ethnic profiles and Rethink simply stated that monitoring was ongoing. Brentwood Mind also indicated that monitoring was in place, adding that the project was working with the community development worker to address the needs of people from BME groups. Thurrock Mind reported working with other groups on

both issues, noting that the age profile had become more balanced than at the start of the pilot.

9. Basildon Mind and Brentwood Mind described the development and review of leaflets describing their services, similar to those provided by Thurrock Mind. Rethink indicated that some leaflets were already distributed, with others delayed due to cost implications. Thurrock Mind itself was in the process of printing additional leaflets.
10. Providers reported on the position regarding joint working with CMHTs. The predominant picture was of variation across CMHTs.

Response to actions for employment specialist service

Because actions relating to the employment specialist service and the social enterprises were combined in the documentation sent to providers, it was not always clear which type of service responses relate to. As far as possible, the responses have been separated out here but there may be some overlap in terms of the type of service to which they relate. Both SEPT and Rethink provided a summary of actions relating to the employment specialist service. Since the SEPT Vocational Services Manager is responsible for the supervision of both organisations' employment specialists, some responses have been synthesised but separate responses are included where relevant.

1. Draft Rethink IPS model has been circulated. Monitoring of caseload size is in place.
2. A sample of care plans will be audited for the Sainsbury Centre's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) pilot.
3. Training for the Certificate in Supported Employment has been offered to specialists. SEPT noted that London Metropolitan University's IPS module will run again in 2009 and that team leader posts have been developed to provide some promotion opportunities.
4. Supervision and support arrangements are in place. Rethink is reviewing these to ensure they are sufficient.
5. Rethink reported that community based employment specialists covering Basildon and Thurrock were demonstrating the need for and benefit of a primary care referral route.

6. SEPT noted that information regarding the new services could be disseminated through Trust internal systems and presentations where appropriate. Rethink reported that good practice was being emulated in areas needing further development and that positive case studies to promote services were being sought.
7. Boundaries around service use are explained to service users and SEPT employment specialists advocate for service users not to be discharged when ongoing support in employment is crucial. SEPT noted that individuals need to be helped to identify 'natural' supports.

Response to actions for social enterprises

1. Both Thurrock Mind and Rethink reported links with SEEE via newsletters and mailings. Rethink was monitoring opportunities arising. Thurrock Mind had liaised with Businesslink for advice etc.
2. The position regarding NVQs was clarified at a Steering Group meeting, where it was agreed that the relevance of NVQs to individual projects was a local decision.
3. Both providers commented that further discussion with commissioners was required about flexibility to the time limit where a clear case could be made to justify this. It was agreed at the Steering Group that flexibility should be assessed on a case by case basis.
4. All Rethink staff have an overview of both community bridge building and social enterprise services. Bridge builders are encouraged to refer service users and a straightforward internal referral process is in place. At Thurrock Mind, day and employment service staff work in partnership to support service users where appropriate.
5. Both providers had produced information about how a period at a social enterprise was intended to benefit service users.
6. Thurrock Mind had already established links with JobCentre Plus to provide something along the lines of the job club suggested by the focus group results. The idea was under discussion at Rethink.
7. Both providers were working to increase referrals.

3. Analysis of monitoring information

At the beginning of the pilots, forms based on Excel spreadsheets were developed for projects to return monthly data to the commissioners¹.

The information requested included:

- For buildings based day services - service user numbers, gender, ethnicity and age groups, together with information about attendances at the group sessions offered.
- For community bridge building – service user uptake, gender, ethnicity and age groups, goals set and goals achieved.
- For befriending services – service user profiles as for bridge building, plus information about group sessions and other project activities.
- For social enterprises – service user profiles as for bridge building, plus information about goals set and achieved and service users' status after placement.
- For the employment specialist service, service user profiles as above, plus information about vocational outcomes.

Due to the time interval between return of the forms and processing them, it was agreed that for the purposes of this report we would focus on data for the nine months from February 2008 to October 2008. The original intention was for the commissioners to provide SE-SURG with three-monthly summary analyses of the data for each project for further analysis. However, problems with providing the monitoring data were not resolved until December 2008. Because of the short time scale remaining, it was agreed that we would base the analyses of service user profiles on snapshots from each project for February, May, August and October². While less robust than using data from across the whole nine month period, this does allow an approximate picture of project development to emerge.

The following sections present our analysis of the data relating to each type of service in turn. Data collated by the commissioners during the consultation period preceding establishment of the pilots indicated that younger people were under-represented in services, with most people aged over 40. In the analyses of age profiles we therefore focus on the proportions of service users in the younger (18-40) and middle (41-60) age groups. Figures for Rise cover the Rise@Rethink services provided in three different localities.

¹ Southend Mind elected not to participate in data monitoring and is therefore not included

² With the exception of the employment specialist service. Cumulative data for this service were provided by the service manager for the period April-November 2008.

Buildings based services

Service user profiles are considered in relation to numbers attending, gender, ethnicity and age, followed by an overview of attendance at group sessions.

Attendance

An increase in attendance was recorded between February and October by all day services. However, at Basildon Mind, Rise and Panorama House the increases were small (+ 3 at Basildon Mind, + 9 at Rise and + 1 at Panorama House). At Basildon Mind, attendance had increased from 59 to 71 between February and August but had decreased again by October to 62.

Larger increases were recorded at Thurrock Mind (+ 12, an increase of 22%) and particularly at Brentwood Mind where numbers rose steadily from 30 to 72, an increase of 140%.

It should be born in mind that larger increases are more likely from a lower starting point, so projects with larger numbers of service users in February were likely to have smaller increases over the study period.

Gender

In February, all day services recorded a predominance of male service users. This was particularly the case at Basildon Mind (61% male), Brentwood Mind (73% male) and Panorama House (76% male). At Thurrock Mind and Rise proportions were more equal (56% male at Thurrock Mind, 59% at Rise).

By October, the position was largely unchanged at Thurrock Mind (54% male), Rise (59% male) and Panorama House (73% male). At Rise the proportion of women had risen from 41% in February to 55% in May, but dropped back to 41% by October.

At Basildon Mind, the proportion of women increased somewhat from 39% in February to 44% in October. At Brentwood Mind a more substantial increase was recorded from 27% in February to 40% in October.

Ethnicity

Figures for Basildon Mind are difficult to interpret because at all four time intervals ethnicity was unstated for a large proportion of service users. Where ethnicity was recorded, it appears that one person from a

non-White BME group³ attended in February, two in May, one in August and none in October.

At the other four services small increases in attendance by people from non-White BME groups were recorded. At Thurrock Mind, no one from a non-White group was recorded as attending in February but in May one person of Indian heritage was recorded as attending and this was sustained at subsequent time intervals.

At Brentwood Mind, one person from a mixed ethnic group was recorded as attending in February but not thereafter. However, one person of 'other' ethnicity was recorded as attending in May and August, and this increased to four people of 'other' ethnicity in October.

At Rise, the number of people from non-White BME groups increased from seven in February to nine in October, the majority (five) described as of 'other Asian' ethnicity.

At Panorama House, no one from a non-White BME group was recorded as attending until October, when one person of Indian heritage was recorded.

Age

At the beginning of the pilots over half of service users at all projects were in the middle age groups (aged 41-60). The proportion was highest at Panorama House (66%) and ranged from 53% to 60% at the other projects. At Thurrock Mind, Basildon Mind and Panorama House the proportion of service users in the younger age groups (aged 18-40) was around one third (range 29% to 34%) At Brentwood Mind the proportion was smaller (23%) and at Rise smaller still (15%).

By October, the proportion in the younger age groups had risen slightly at Panorama House (from 34% to 37%), Thurrock Mind (31% to 38%) and Basildon Mind (29% to 31%).

At Panorama House and Thurrock Mind, the increase was accounted for mainly by people aged 31 to 40. While one more person aged 18 to 30 was recorded at Panorama House in October than in February, two more people aged 31 to 40 were recorded. At Thurrock Mind, one more person aged 18 to 30 was also recorded in October, but seven more people aged 31 to 40 were recorded.

³ We acknowledge that this term does not reflect the diversity of White ethnic groups but the numbers of people from White groups other than White British were too small to account for in this overview analysis.

At Basildon Mind, this picture was reversed. Here, the number of people aged 18 to 30 rose from four to seven, while the number aged 31 to 40 decreased from 13 to 12.

At Rise, there was little change in the proportions of people in the younger and middle age groups. At Brentwood Mind, however, the proportion in the younger age groups rose more substantially, from 23% to 31%. The increase was accounted for mainly by an increase in people aged 18-30 (13 people in October compared with only three in February).

Session attendance

At Thurrock Mind there was little change in attendance at sessions. A total of 254 attendances were recorded for February and a total of 247 for October. At the other projects attendances increased substantially:

- From 79 to 169 at Basildon Mind, an increase of 114%
- From 148 to 281 at Brentwood Mind, an increase of 90%
- From 324 to 1161 at Rise, an increase of 258%
- From 121 to 361 at Panorama House, an increase of 198%.

At Basildon Mind, Brentwood Mind and Panorama House the increases appear to be accounted for at least in part by the introduction of new sessions, since an attendance figure of 0 was recorded in February for two sessions at Basildon Mind and three at Brentwood Mind and Panorama House. At Brentwood Mind the substantial overall increase in service users numbers would have been a further contributory factor. At Basildon Mind and Panorama House the increases in overall numbers were too small to have contributed to any great extent to increased attendance at sessions. It is difficult to account for the very large increase at Rise as there was no indication that new sessions had been introduced and the small increase in overall numbers of service users was not sufficient to account for such a large increase. It may be that existing service users who were using only the drop in services in February began to engage with the new sessions over the study period. The nine additional service users recorded may also be making substantial use of the new sessions.

Community bridge building

Service user profiles are considered in relation to uptake of the bridge building services, gender, ethnicity and age. Unfortunately, owing to difficulties with the provision and collection of data, it was not possible in the time available for the commissioners to provide data about goals achieved to inform our overview analysis.

Uptake

All projects recorded steady increases in uptake of their community bridge building service, the rate of increase appearing in part to reflect the extent to which a similar service was in place before February 2008. For example, the increases ranged from a 39% increase at Brentwood Mind to a 1467% increase at Basildon Mind. From a relatively high starting point of 18 people in February, numbers at Brentwood Mind increased to 25 by October. At Basildon Mind, the much higher percentage increase is accounted for because only three people were recorded in February, rising to 47 by October.

Gender

At Brentwood Mind and Panorama House, men were in the majority for the whole time period. At Brentwood Mind this decreased somewhat from 89% in February to 72% in October. While the proportion of women did rise from 11% in February, to 39% in May, by October the proportion had decreased to 28%. At Panorama House the proportion of men increased slightly from 74% to 78% because nine more men were recorded in October compared with February, while only one more woman was recorded.

At Basildon Mind, the picture was reversed, with women in the majority (67% in February, 58% in October). The numbers of both men and women increased over the time period, with a slightly larger percentage increase for men.

At Thurrock Mind, the proportions of men and women were more equal over the time period, with a small increase for men of 8% between February (48%) and October (56%). Again, the numbers of both men and women increased over the time period, but with a slightly larger percentage increase for men.

At Rise, the proportions of men and women were similar in February (51% men, 49% women) but by October the proportion of women was higher at 61%. At this project the numbers of both men and women had also increased, but the percentage increase for women was considerably greater.

Ethnicity

At Panorama House, no service users from a non-White BME group were recorded at any time interval. At three other projects the number of service users from non-White BME groups increased by one or two over the time period:

- At Brentwood Mind, from a starting point of no non-White BME service users, one person of 'other' ethnicity was recorded in October.
- At Basildon Mind, one person of mixed White/ Asian ethnicity was recorded at all four time intervals. In October a second person of 'mixed other' ethnicity was recorded.
- At Thurrock Mind, from a starting point of no non-White BME service users, one person of Bangladeshi heritage was recorded from May and one person of Indian heritage from August.

The largest increase was at Rise. Two people of 'other Asian' ethnicity were recorded in February, May and October. By October a further six people from non-White BME groups were recorded, making a total of eight: one of mixed White/ Black Caribbean ethnicity, one Black Caribbean, one Black African, two Asian Indian, two 'other Asian' and one Chinese.

Age

At Thurrock Mind, Panorama House and Brentwood Mind there was little change in the proportions of people in the younger and middle age groups. At Thurrock Mind the proportions of younger and middle age groups were identical at 43% in February and this had not changed substantially by October (younger 40%, middle 38%). The numbers in all age groups rose, but by a slightly higher percentage increase for people in the middle age groups.

At Panorama House, around a third of service users were in the younger age groups in February, with around two thirds in the middle age groups. These proportions did not change substantially, but the proportion of younger people did decrease slightly by 3% while the proportion of people in the middle age groups increased correspondingly. Only one person in the 18-30 group was recorded in February and no one was recorded in this youngest age group in October.

At Brentwood Mind the picture was reversed, with a higher proportion of younger people in both February (61%) and October (60%). Although the number of people aged 31-40 decreased from nine to three, this was offset by an increase in the number aged 18-30 from two to 12. The numbers of people in most other groups remained fairly stable, with an increase from three to seven for people in the 41-50 group.

At Basildon Mind and Rise, people in the middle age groups predominated in February. At Basildon Mind no service users in the younger age groups were recorded in February, while at Rise the younger age groups comprised 36% of all service users, compared with 51% for the middle age groups. By October, this imbalance had been

redressed at Basildon Mind, with 44% in the younger age groups and 49% in the middle groups. Numbers in all age groups increased, but the increase was considerably greater in the two younger groups, from a starting point of no one in either group in February to nine aged 18-30 and four aged 31-40 in October.

At Rise, the proportion of people in the younger groups fell from 36% in February to 14% in October, while the proportion in the middle groups rose to 67%. Numbers in both younger groups decreased (by one for 18-30 and five for 31-40), while numbers in all other groups increased.

Befriending services

Service user profiles are considered in relation to uptake of the two befriending services, gender, ethnicity and age, followed by an overview of group and other activities.

Uptake

Uptake of Rethink's Good Companion's service increased steadily over the study period, with a 23% increase by October from a starting point of 237 service users to 292 in October. Uptake of Thurrock Mind's service also increased although the percentage increase from February to October was lower at 17% (54 service users in February, 63 in October) than at Good Companions, probably due to the smaller catchment area and increased funding for Good Companions.

Gender

At both projects the proportions of men and women using the services remained largely unchanged, with men comprising around one third of the total and women two thirds at all time intervals.

Ethnicity

At Good Companions the ethnicity of 97% of service users was unstated in February, falling to under 30% at subsequent time intervals. It was therefore only possible to include data for May to October, and this may be inaccurate due to the numbers still recorded as unstated. Between May and October the number of people recorded as from non-White BME groups rose from six to eight, the eight people in October comprising:

- Two of 'mixed other' ethnicity
- One 'Black other' ethnicity
- Two of Indian heritage
- Three of 'other Asian' ethnicity.

At Thurrock Mind, one person of 'other Asian' ethnicity was recorded in February and May, but no one from a non-White BME group was recorded thereafter.

Age

The age profiles of service users at both projects were not dissimilar and remained relatively stable across the study period. At both projects around half of all service users were in the middle age groups, with the remaining people fairly evenly divided between the younger and older (60+) groups.

Other activities

The activities recorded at both Good Companions and Thurrock Mind included group sessions (social events for befrienders and service users), peer group social sessions facilitated by staff and volunteers for service users awaiting a befriender match, and volunteer training. Thurrock Mind also runs a creative group coordinated by the support worker to provide opportunities for service users to share skills and ideas, and to lead workshops.

At Good Companions, the number of group sessions decreased steadily, from 79 in February to 32 in October, while the number of peer group sessions increased from 20 in February to 36 in October, with a peak of 50 sessions in August. At Thurrock Mind, the number of group sessions also decreased, from 15 in February to two in October. Six peer group sessions were recorded for May, but none thereafter.

Good Companions ran volunteer training sessions in February (five sessions) and October (two sessions). A total of 77 people attended the sessions and 18 became befrienders. At Thurrock Mind, nine training sessions attended by four people were recorded for May. Only one person was recorded as becoming a befriender, in February.

At Good Companions mental health promotion activity (visits to other organisations to provide information and recruit potential volunteers) and mental health employer sessions (training/workshop sessions for employers and employees) were also recorded⁴. A total of 117 mental health promotion sessions were recorded during the four months, 87 in February and 30 in October. Eight mental health employer sessions were recorded in May and 20 in August.

⁴ These activities were not included in Thurrock Mind's contract.

Social enterprises

Service user profiles for the social enterprises are presented as in the previous section, followed by overviews of goals set and achieved and service users' status after placement. Information about service user profiles at Rethink Distribution was only available for May and October 2008.

Uptake

At Rethink Graphics and Stepping Stones there were small increases in service user numbers across the study period, from five people in February at Rethink Graphics to 11 in October, and from 24 to 30 people at Stepping Stones. At Rethink Distribution there was also a small increase from ten in May to 13 in October. Perhaps because of the higher starting point, numbers were fairly stable at Pet Supplies, with 34 people recorded in February and 35 in October.

Gender

The gender balance at Rethink Graphics was fairly equal throughout the study period, with three men and three women included in the six additional service users recorded in October. Similarly numbers of men and women at Pet Supplies were fairly equal, with 19 women and 15 men in February, 18 men and 17 women in October.

At Stepping Stones and Rethink Distribution, men were in the majority throughout the period. Six additional men but no additional women were recorded in October at Stepping Stones. Similarly, three additional men but no additional women were recorded at Rethink Distribution.

Ethnicity

All service users at Rethink Graphics and Rethink Distribution were of White ethnicity throughout the study period. At Stepping Stones, one person of Bangladeshi heritage and one of Indian heritage were recorded throughout the period. At Pet Supplies one person of mixed White/Black Caribbean ethnicity and one of Black Caribbean heritage were recorded throughout. In addition, one person of mixed White/Asian ethnicity was recorded at the first three time intervals, increasing to two people in October.

Age

Numbers at Rethink Graphics were too small to begin with to provide a meaningful analysis across time, but by October the 11 service users recorded represented all working age groups, with one person aged 18-

30 compared with none in February and three people aged 31-40 compared with two in February.

At Rethink Distribution service users spanned the working age groups at both time intervals for which data were available. All three additional service users recorded in October were in the younger groups, two aged 18-30 and one aged 31-40.

People in the middle age groups predominated at Stepping Stones in February (54% compared with 25% in the younger groups). By October the balance was less uneven, with 40% in the younger groups and 53% in the middle groups. The change was mainly due to the addition of six people in the younger groups, five aged 18-30 and one aged 31-40.

At Pet Supplies the position in February was reversed, with 65% of service users in the younger groups compared with 32% in the middle groups. In October, the proportion of younger people had increased further, to 80%. This was due to an increase of six people in the younger groups, including four aged 18-30, together with a decrease of four people in the middle age groups.

Goals set and achieved

Social enterprises were asked to record goals set and outcomes achieved using four headings:

- Universal work skills
- Specific work skills
- Complete state level qualification
- Personal development.

At Rethink Graphics, for 16 individuals the goals set and achieved were:

- Universal work skills – 14 goals set, four achieved
- Specific work skills – two goals set, none yet achieved
- Completing qualifications – four goals set, one achieved
- Personal development – two goals set, both achieved.

Goals set and achieved for 14 individuals at Rethink Distribution were:

- Universal work skills – nine goals set, one achieved
- Personal development – five goals set, none recorded as achieved.⁵

At Stepping Stones and Pet Supplies, the goals recorded as set were more evenly distributed across the categories. For 30 individuals at Stepping Stones the goals set and achieved were:

- Universal work skills – 30 goals set, nine achieved

⁵ 13 outcomes were recorded as unstated at this enterprise

- Specific work skills – 30 goals set, 12 achieved
- Completing qualifications – 29 goals set, ten achieved
- Personal development – 29 goals set, eight achieved.

For 34 individuals at Pet Supplies, the goals set and achieved were:

- Universal work skills – 22 goals set, 16 achieved
- Specific work skills – 25 goals set, 19 achieved
- Completing qualifications – 28 goals set, 14 achieved
- Personal development – 21 goals set, five achieved.

Status following placement

A total of 94 individuals were recorded as using the four enterprises.

Status following placement was recorded for 23:

- Eight were doing voluntary work, four each from Stepping Stones and Pet Supplies
- Seven, all from Pet Supplies, had been referred to an employment specialist
- Three had obtained paid work, two from Pet Supplies, one from Rethink Distribution
- Three, all from Pet Supplies, were using day services
- Two had entered mainstream education or training, one from Stepping Stones, one from Pet Supplies.

Status following placement was recorded as unknown for five people.

Employment specialist service

The analyses presented for the employment specialist service differ somewhat from those for other services for two reasons. Firstly, the categories used for service user profiles at the employment specialist service differ from those used elsewhere. In particular, the age groups used are 16 - 35, 36 - 50, 51 - 65 and 65+. Secondly, employment specialists for some localities were not in post in February and were recruited over varying periods of time. For this reason our analysis is based on cumulative data from April. However, we were able to obtain data up to November 2008 and our analyses therefore covers this eight month period. They include:

- The service user demographic profile
- Employment status on referral
- Vocational outcomes.

Service user profile

A total of 218 people were recorded as using the employment specialist service over the eight months. The proportions of men and women were fairly equal (54% male, 46% female). Eleven service users (5%)

were from non-White BME groups, the largest group (five) recorded as being from Black ethnic groups.

In terms of age, there was a fairly even distribution across the younger (18-35) and middle (36-50) age groups, with 82 service users (38%) in the younger group and 95 (44%) in the middle group. A smaller proportion (18%) were aged 51 to 65 and two people were aged over 65.

Employment status

Half the service users (109) were unemployed on referral. Sixty-five (30%) were working and 39 (18%) were involved in other vocational activities, including education and training. Employment status was not recorded for five people.

Vocational outcomes

By the end of November 2008, 50 service users had been supported into new employment. Of the 50, 46 had been unemployed on referral, while four had been employed but had been supported to find more suitable jobs. A further four people had been supported to retain their current job.

In addition, 49 people had been supported into education and 32 into voluntary work. It should be born in mind that because these are cumulative figures, some service users included in the total of 218 would have been receiving a service for only a short period of time, and would therefore have been less likely to achieve a vocational outcome.

4. Outcomes survey

Data for the outcomes survey were collected at baseline (when service users first started using a pilot service) and follow up (six months later). The baseline questionnaire included:

- Questions about the services participants were using and whether they had been using those services prior to the pilots.
- Questions about occupational and educational activity (paid & voluntary or unpaid work; courses leading to a formal qualification & other courses).
- A measure of empowerment comprising four individual scales (mutual aid, self worth, positive outlook & self efficacy)
- A measure of social inclusion comprising three scales (social isolation, social acceptance & social relations).
- Questions about participants' background (gender, age, ethnicity, marital status & whether living alone or with other people).

The follow up questionnaire included:

- Questions about whether participants were still with the project they had been with at baseline, if so for how long they had been with the project and which types of services they were using, and whether they were using services provided by other projects.
- Questions about occupational and educational activity as at baseline.
- The same measures of empowerment and social inclusion.
- A bespoke satisfaction measure covering overall satisfaction; specific aspects (involvement in care planning, sensitivity to individual mental health and cultural needs, staff optimism, whether the service was sufficiently challenging and the importance of the service for recovery); and how well the service was meeting needs compared with previous services.
- Questions about participants' background as at baseline.

Space was left on both questionnaires for participants to make additional comments.

For the baseline survey, project staff were asked to give everyone receiving a new pilot service between March and May 2008 a copy of the questionnaire, to encourage them to complete it and to provide assistance if necessary. Because of delays in establishing the employment services and low initial rates of referral, the deadline for distributing questionnaires to employment service users was extended to June 2008.

Participants were asked to provide contact information on a separate, detachable page so they could be sent a follow up questionnaire direct from SE-SURG. If preferred, participants could give their day or employment project as their contact address rather than personal information. To encourage a good response to the follow up questionnaire, everyone who returned the baseline version was sent a 'thank you' card and asked to let SE-SURG know if their contact details changed.

Based on projects' estimates of the numbers required, a total of 535 baseline questionnaires were distributed to projects. The number given to service users is unknown as projects took different approaches to this, but 186 were returned. Of these, 182 provided contact information and follow up questionnaires were mailed out to these people approximately six months after their first questionnaire was received. To encourage a good response it was agreed that everyone who returned a follow up questionnaire should be offered the opportunity to enter a prize draw, with five £20 high street vouchers available as prizes. Seventy eight service users returned questionnaires, a response rate of 43%. Fifty three people wished to enter the prize draw. Names

were drawn at random and vouchers were sent to the five winners in December 2008.

SE-SURG members entered the data on an SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) database. Data analysis was carried out for SE-SURG by Dr Tim Schafer, Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, and a report detailing the results of the baseline survey was provided in August 2008. Data were examined using the descriptive and cross-tabulation functions on SPSS and tests of statistical significance as appropriate for the type of data.

Because projects were unhappy with our request that identifiers be used in order to link baseline and follow up questionnaires, even though this would have been done in accordance with ethical requirements, we are unable to directly compare results for people who returned both questionnaires. This report therefore compares the full baseline results with the follow up results. The implication is that any change (or lack of change) identified over the six month follow up period may be due to lower or higher baseline scores amongst the 57% of baseline respondents who did not return a follow up questionnaire, making the outcomes study considerably less robust than would otherwise have been the case. In addition, because the questionnaires could not be linked it was not possible to calculate changes in scores by sub-group, e.g. participant variables or the services used.

Results

The results of the survey are presented below in relation to:

- The survey participants
- Employment, education and training
- Empowerment
- Social inclusion
- Satisfaction with services
- Participants' comments.

Survey participants

Of the 78 people who returned a questionnaire, 48 were male and 30 female. The majority (74) described themselves as White British ethnicity. Three of the other four people did not state their ethnicity. The fourth person described themselves as Bangladeshi.

Table 1 on the next page shows the number and proportion of participants in each age group.

Table 1. Follow up sample by age group

Age group	N	%
18 – 30	6	7.7
31 – 40	13	16.7
41 – 50	22	28.2
51 – 60	21	26.9
Over 60	16	20.5
Total	78	100

When compared with the 182 people included in the baseline survey, the follow up sample was slightly older, with a slightly higher proportion of people living alone and fewer married people. However, these differences were not statistically significant and the follow up sample was therefore reasonably representative of the baseline sample.

Table 2 shows the distribution of follow up responses across the day and employment services. Compared with the baseline response, the number of questionnaires returned from all services decreased(except for Rethink Distribution where one response was received on each occasion), but as a proportion of all responses received the distribution was similar to that at baseline. The only difference of any size was for Basildon Mind, where the response decreased from 16.7% of the total at baseline to 10.3% of the total at follow up. Again, this was not statistically significant and the services about which participants were responding are therefore also broadly representative of the baseline sample.

Table 2. Distribution of follow up responses by service

Service	Response (n)	% of total response
Thurrock Mind	8	10.2
Brentwood Mind	10	12.8
Basildon Mind	8	10.3
Southend Mind	5	6.4
Rise@Rethink	16	20.5
Panorama House	8	10.3
Good Companions	6	7.7
Employment specialist	7	9.0
Rethink Graphics	1	1.3
Rethink Distribution	1	1.3
Rethink Pet Supplies	2	2.6
Stepping Stones	6	7.7
Total	78	100.0

Ten service users indicated they were using other services (not all of them pilot services) in addition to the service named on their follow up questionnaire and others may also have been doing so.

Employment, education and training

Compared with the baseline sample:

- A slightly smaller proportion of follow up participants were working (1.1% at follow up; 3.8% at baseline)
- A slightly higher proportion were retired (14.1% at follow up; 11.4% at baseline)
- Mean working hours decreased to 20 hours from 29.3 hours at baseline
- A higher proportion were doing voluntary or unpaid work (37.1% at follow up; 26.1% at baseline)
- Mean hours of voluntary work increased slightly (6.5 hours at follow up; 6.1 at baseline)
- A slightly higher proportion were working towards a qualification (20% at follow up; 17.5% at baseline)
- Of those who were not working towards a qualification, a slightly higher proportion were planning to do so (15.9% at follow up; 13.4% at baseline)
- A higher proportion were doing training that did not lead to a formal qualification (23.9% at follow up; 18.8% at baseline)

None of these changes were statistically significant at the .05 confidence level, but the increase in the proportion of people doing voluntary work was approaching significance ($p=.086$, $z=1.719$).

Of the courses listed by the people who were undertaking training that did not lead to a formal qualification, literacy and/or numeracy classes were most frequently listed (by 6 people). Arts, cookery, computing and courses relating to mental health such as anger management, confidence building and relaxation were each listed by two people. One person listed budgeting alongside art and cookery classes, one listed French and one explained that he was currently studying at home but receiving help from a CPN to identify potential college courses.

Empowerment

There were no significant differences in mean scores on the empowerment measure between baseline and follow up (Table 3). Overall, scores decreased very slightly, with the largest decrease on the mutual aid scale. However, scores on the positive outlook scale increased slightly.

The individual items on the empowerment measure that showed most improvement were:

- 'Usually I feel alone' from the self-efficacy scale

- 'I generally accomplish what I set out to do' from the positive outlook scale.

Table 3. Changes in empowerment scores

Group Statistics					
	Pre or post service	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self Worth	Pre	178	3.0871	.71658	.05371
	Post	78	3.0844	.67346	.07625
Self Efficacy	Pre	179	2.3017	.74284	.05552
	Post	77	2.2900	.80040	.09121
Mutual Aid	Pre	178	3.1756	.60964	.04569
	Post	78	3.0353	.71150	.08056
Positive Outlook	Pre	179	2.9220	.77795	.05815
	Post	78	2.9474	.80485	.09113
Total mean empowerment score	Pre	180	2.8642	.56250	.04193
	Post	78	2.8512	.58947	.06674

The individual items where mean scores worsened most were:

- 'People have more power if they join together as a group' from the mutual aid scale
- 'I feel I have very few options open to me regarding my future' from the self-efficacy scale.

Social inclusion

Mean scores on all three social inclusion scales increased slightly from baseline (Table 4), although the differences did not reach statistical significance.

Compared with the baseline results, scores for 11 individual items improved, scores for two items were unchanged and scores for two items decreased.

On the individual items, the greatest improvements were for:

- 'I have learnt something about other people's cultures' from the social relations scale
- 'I have been out socially with friends' from the social isolation scale

- 'I have done some cultural activities' from the social relations scale.

The two items where scores worsened were:

- 'My social life has been mainly related to mental health services or people who use mental health services' from the social relations scale
- 'I have felt free to express my beliefs', from the social acceptance scale.

Table 4. Changes in social inclusion scores

Group Statistics					
	Pre or post service	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Isolation	Pre	181	2.8927	.81496	.06058
	Post	78	2.9872	.75343	.08531
Social Relations	Pre	181	2.4167	.62542	.04649
	Post	78	2.5072	.62634	.07092
Social Acceptance	Pre	181	2.8819	.70907	.05270
	Post	78	2.9449	.68289	.07732
Total mean social inclusion score	Pre	181	2.6256	.59342	.04411
	Post	78	2.7080	.56706	.06421

Satisfaction with services

Participants' ratings on the satisfaction measure were very positive (Table 5), with all items rated above the mid point on the five point rating scale.

On the individual items:

- 95% of respondents agreed that the service was an important part of their recovery and less than 3% disagreed
- 80% agreed that the service was sensitive to their needs, with 5% disagreeing
- 87% were satisfied with the help they were receiving, although 9% were dissatisfied
- 80% were satisfied that their contributions to their plan of care were valued, with 8% disagreeing
- 84% felt they worked well in partnership with staff on planning their programme, although 12% disagreed

- 78% thought service staff were optimistic about their future; 9% disagreed
- 79% found their service sufficiently stimulating and challenging; 11% did not
- 71% thought their service was culturally sensitive, although 12% disagreed.

Table 5. Satisfaction ratings

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
The service is an important factor in my recovery from mental health problems	76	1.00	5.00	4.5000
The service has been sensitive to my particular mental health needs	74	1.00	5.00	4.311
Overall, I am satisfied with the help I have received through the service	76	1.00	5.00	4.2632
I feel my contributions to my plan of care are valued	74	1.00	5.00	4.1486
The staff and I have worked closely together in planning my programme	73	1.00	5.00	4.0959
The staff at the service are optimistic about my future	68	1.00	5.00	4.0294
My time with the service has been sufficiently challenging and stimulating	71	1.00	5.00	3.9437
The service has been sensitive to my cultural or ethnic needs	65	1.00	5.00	3.9077

Fifty nine people who had been using their service before January 2008 responded to the final question about how well the pilot service was meeting their needs compared with the previous service. Twenty nine people (49%) thought the pilot service was meeting their needs better, while 22 (37%) thought it was much the same. Only eight people (14%) thought the pilot service was not meeting their needs as well as the previous service. There were no significant differences in these views relating to service type (day or employment), gender or employment, education and training.

Participants' comments

A total of 39 participants added comments to their follow up questionnaire. Their views reflect the positive ratings of satisfaction with services and are considered below in turn in relation to day/befriending and employment services.

Comments on day and befriending services

The comments received about these services related to:

- Thurrock Mind (2 comments)
- Brentwood Mind (6 comments)
- Basildon Mind (6 comments)
- Panorama House (3 comments)
- Southend Mind (1 comments)
- Rise@Rethink (12 comments)
- Good Companions (2 comments).

Another service user from Basildon Mind commented directly to the commissioners by email and these comments are also included at the commissioners' request.

Three comments appeared to refer to mental health services more generally, including the only comment received from Southend Mind, one from Basildon Mind and one from Good Companions. A fourth comment, from Thurrock Mind, related to the questionnaire itself, to the effect that the person concerned had needed help to fill it in.

Of the other comments, the most frequent (16) were general expressions of appreciation that could not always be directly related to particular services and may refer to the previous services, the pilot services or both. All the comments from Brentwood Mind and Panorama House were of this nature, as were four from Rise, one from Basildon Mind and one from Good Companions. For example:

Brentwood Mind is great and the staff are fabulous.

I feel that I am definitely moving forward which I am glad about thanks to the help and support I am receiving. (Basildon Mind)

I have been coming to Panorama now for 5 years. All the staff and members are nice people and have helped me loads.

The service provided by Rise, Southend took me from a comatose condition to active and enjoyable and productive living.

I'd like to be with my befriender for another year. (Good Companions)

One appreciative comment from Rise did refer explicitly to the introduction of the pilot services. In addition, one comment from Thurrock Mind and one from Rise referred specifically to community

bridge building, while one from Basildon Mind referred to the groups run there:

I am finding that the changes are better as I am able to feel like everyone else and move on with my life, it can be hard at times but I will get there one day. I am a fighter. (Rise)

Since changing to 'CBB' the staff have been really expert in attending to my every mental need, & I'd be at a loss without their caring generous professionalism. (Rise)

I think the staff are really good and Thurrock Mind is better now because of Community Bridge Building than it was before.

The groups I have attended thru [Basildon] Mind have helped greatly...

Although positive comments were by far the most frequent, four people from Basildon Mind and four from Rise expressed concern about the changes brought about by the pilots. The participant from Basildon Mind quoted above continued:

... although it is a shame that thru the drastic reduction in hours that the drop-in is open as a 'social drop-in' there is no longer the daily support which was provided prior to this pilot project. This daily support was extremely helpful to me & my fellow members when going through a bad period in our illness when it was reassuring to know that support was there by staff who know us well.

Three other participants from Basildon Mind made similar comments about drop-in hours, as did three from Rise. One of these participants from Rise also commented on the provision of Sunday lunch, as did a fourth Rise member:

Sundays dinners in Rise drop in club as before.

Bring back Sunday lunch as we miss it very much and more hours please and the staff speak to us more and do more things.

Concern about the reduction in drop-in hours at Basildon Mind was the main focus of the comments emailed directly to the commissioners, which appeared to relate to the particular needs of people in work:

I am still very down. I got an hour at [the drop-in] yesterday. I probably won't get there again till 1900 next Wednesday. I have another demanding job with a tight deadline. If I had the chance to

go at 1900 on Tuesday, as well as Wednesday, it would make a huge difference to me.

There were no clear gender differences in the distribution of positive and negative comments. Ten women and 12 men made positive comments, while four women and four men made negative comments.

Comments about employment services

Unsurprisingly, given the smaller number of questionnaires received from employment service users, fewer comments concerned these services. Those that were received related to:

- The employment specialist service (3 comments)
- Rethink Graphics (1 comment)
- Rethink Pet Supplies (1 comment)
- Stepping Stones (2 comments).

All three comments about the employment specialist service and both comments from the two Rethink social enterprises were very positive:

They are very understanding and supportive. Always willing to listen and caring toward people. (Employment specialist service)

The service I am using is very good for me. Thanks. (Employment specialist service)

These services have been a life saver to me. I work part time because that is enough for me and I couldn't cope with full time. It would be so easy to give up work but I know that if I did I would be dead in a few months. (Employment specialist service)

Rethink [Graphics] are the best organisation that I have come across. They have helped me in so many ways and will continue to do so.

I think that Rethink Pet Supplies is a very good service. It has improved my confidence and enabled me to become more sociable. Without a service like this I don't think that I would be in the position that I am now.

The two comments from Stepping Stones, one from a man aged over 60 and one from a woman aged 31-40, were less positive, although one of the two did also single out the project manager for praise:

Morale is very low [Staff member] is very kind, caring and understanding. The project itself lacks structure and is not run like a rehabilitation work place. During the winter there is nothing to do and there seems to be a lack of interest in the welfare of the

service users and their future in society. There is not enough focus on building a team environment or encouraging education. It requires more days out to learn about nurseries and gardening. It needs gardens to work on in the local area to help advertise the project and help us to socialise more and achieve more within ourselves. The nursery needs to be run like a professional working nursery. We need a proper learning plan and things to achieve and to be given our own jobs to do and to have proper supervision from more qualified, enthusiastic staff.

At present I am using Stepping Stones (Garden project, Grays). Your first advertisement said I would learn skills and gain confidence to obtain work or something. I do not see the pilot scheme working as nearly one year is up and I have not known anyone that has sought employment through this channel. What happens next, after the funding has been used up?

5. Discussion

Three issues need to be highlighted before considering the evaluation results. Firstly, the difficulties experienced in obtaining project monitoring data in a useable form raise the issue of the capacity commissioners have to process the information projects are asked to provide. We suggest that the monitoring system should be seen as a pilot exercise in itself and that commissioners and providers use this experience as a basis to learn from the exercise and to review the type of data it is feasible to collect and process for future monitoring. The main implication for the evaluation itself was that we have not been able to include information about the goals being achieved through community bridge building and could only include activity levels. Obviously, the goals achieved through project activity are central to an evaluation and finding a more feasible way to monitor goals therefore seems an important next step.

Secondly, that we were unable to link baseline and follow up questionnaires for the outcomes study means that, with the exception of the satisfaction survey, the results have to be treated with considerable caution and do not in themselves provide meaningful guidance. Taken together, however, the three strands of the evaluation do provide evidence of the pilot projects' progress. In the discussion that follows, we will draw on the information obtained from across all strands of the study to weigh the significance of the results. For the future, however, we would highlight the need to use anonymous identifiers to link questionnaires if further outcomes studies are to be of real use.

Thirdly, our evaluation was only one of several sources of information that need to be considered in drawing conclusions about the pilots. We

were only able to include data collected over a relatively short period of time of less than a year and a longer study period would have been helpful in evaluating the results achieved by the social enterprises in particular. The other sources of information that need to be considered do cover the full 12 month pilot period. They include the minutes of the service user reference group (SURG) and steering group meetings, and particularly the regular updates provided by projects to the steering groups.

The results themselves are considered in turn below for day services, befriending and employment services.

Day services

All three strands of the evaluation indicate that for the most part the new day services were proving successful. Attendance at building based activities had increased at all projects, in some cases quite considerably. Most services had also achieved a reasonable gender and age balance by October and there were signs that people from BME groups were beginning to engage with some services. Ongoing monitoring of ethnicity would shed more light on this, and could be strengthened at Basildon Mind, where the ethnicity of a large proportion of service users was unrecorded throughout the pilot period.

The extent of change on all dimensions in the service user profile at Brentwood Mind was so striking that it merits a special mention. At Rise, the service user profile remained predominantly middle aged and this may require further thought.

Uptake of the community bridge building services was also impressive, and again the gender and age balance was fairly equitable at most services. The predominance of men at Brentwood Mind does indicate further monitoring of the gender balance there would be useful and the decrease in younger age groups at Rise further supports the need to address this issue at the Rise projects. As with the buildings based services, people from BME groups were taking up some bridge building services, with a particularly notable increase in this respect at Rise.

One project, Panorama House, does appear to have made less progress in relation to all aspects of the service user profile, with a predominantly White, middle aged male service user profile throughout the pilot period. Particular attention probably needs to be paid to developing a more balanced profile at this project.

The largely positive results for day services are strengthened by the high levels of satisfaction reported by outcomes survey participants, the

majority of whom were day service users. It was particularly striking that almost half the people who had been using their service before the pilots started thought the new services were meeting their needs better and a further third thought their needs were met as well as before. These results indicate that for the great majority of service users change is not being achieved at the expense of satisfaction with services. However, eight people, from Basildon Mind and Rise, thought the new services were meeting their needs less well, and seven of these people were amongst those who added comments to the survey reflecting ongoing concern about the reduction in drop in hours and provision of meals. For this small group of people, ongoing efforts to enable them to engage with the new services or meet their needs in other ways are clearly important. It is worth noting that the four dissatisfied people from Rise were over 60 years old, and it may be worth exploring whether services aimed at this older age group are available as an option.

The empowerment and social inclusion results raise a related question, flagged up in our baseline report, of whether higher levels of social inclusion might be being achieved at the expense of lower levels of the mutual aid and peer support associated with empowerment. At first sight, the slight decrease in empowerment scores, particularly for mutual aid, coupled with the slight increase for social inclusion, suggest this might be the case. It has to be borne in mind, though, that these differences were not statistically significant and could simply be due to chance. In addition, the worsening of scores for the social inclusion question 'My social life has been mainly related to mental health services or people who use services', coupled with improvements for 'feeling alone' on the empowerment measure, suggests that peer group contact had not decreased.

Where scores on the empowerment measure worsened, it may be that worries related to the economic downturn, which started to have an impact between the baseline and follow up surveys, could have influenced people's responses. Because it was not feasible to establish a control or comparison group the impact of wider influences like this remains unknown.

The increase in the proportion of people reporting that their social life revolved around mental health does raise a further question, however, of the extent to which day services, particularly community bridge building, are enabling people to engage with their local communities as individuals, as opposed to as a member of a service user group. Access to useable data about the goals achieved through bridge building might have helped address this question. As it is, we can only highlight the question as needing some consideration.

Befriending services

It was clear from the focus groups held during the consultation period prior to establishing the pilot services that Good Companions was already achieving many of the aims underpinning the changes introduced by the pilots. The results of the evaluation indicate that the extended Good Companions service and the Thurrock Mind service were bringing the benefits identified during the consultation to many other people, with both services recording increases in uptake. The range of activities recorded in the monitoring data was also impressive and it would be interesting to know more about the impact of the mental health promotion and employment related activities being undertaken by Good Companions. This could perhaps be the focus of a further small piece of research.

Against that very positive background, the two services may wish to consider whether they could engage more men, since only a third of service users at each project were male. At Good Companions, ethnic monitoring was patchy and it would be helpful to strengthen this. At Thurrock Mind, the question of how to engage people from BME groups seems important, given that the proportion of people from these groups using mental health services is twice that in other localities (7% in Thurrock, compared with 3.8% in Southend, the locality with the second highest proportion).

Employment services

At first sight the decreases in the proportion of people in paid work and in hours worked identified by the outcomes survey seem disappointing, but these results do have to be treated with caution for a number of reasons:

- The differences were not statistically significant and may therefore just be due to chance.
- The differences may be due to higher employment rates at baseline amongst the 57% of baseline respondents who did not return a follow up questionnaire. Because the baseline and follow up questionnaires could not be linked it was not possible to assess this.
- It may be that some of the people who did not complete a follow up questionnaire had left services because they had obtained work.
- The higher proportion of people describing themselves as retired may have contributed to the decreases, although this may also be due to people who were retired at baseline not completing a follow up questionnaire.

Perhaps most significantly, monitoring data from the employment specialist service indicates that in the eight months from April to November 2008, 46 of 109 people who had been unemployed on referral had been supported back to work. This represents 42% of those unemployed on referral and is at the upper end of the range of 12 month outcomes reported in the international literature. Since monitoring data from this service are cumulative, some of the 109 unemployed people may only have been receiving the service for a few weeks. In addition, data were only available for eight months, so it is likely that the overall employment rate over 12 months is in fact higher than achieved elsewhere. These very positive results are unlikely to have been captured in the outcomes survey because delays in establishing employment specialist posts meant only small numbers of people using the service were included in the survey, and only seven returned a follow up questionnaire.

The more positive results from the outcomes survey also have to be treated with caution for the same methodological reasons explained above. However, the increase in the proportion of people doing voluntary work did approach statistical significance, and data from both the social enterprises and the employment specialist service support the view that voluntary activity is increasing.

Turning to the service user profiles at the employment services, it was clear that the employment specialist service was reaching an appropriate range of people in terms of age and gender. In addition, a slightly higher proportion of service users (5%) were from BME groups, compared with the ethnic profile for all service users in South Essex (3.9%).

At the social enterprises, uptake was increasing or stable at relatively high levels and at most enterprises the gender balance was fairly even by October. At Stepping Stones and Rethink Distribution service users remained predominantly male and these services seemed to be engaging more new men than women, so this does require consideration. However, several of the new service users recorded at both services were in the younger age groups, as a result of which the age profile at the enterprises was more balanced by October. At Rethink Graphics, the age profile was also fairly well balanced, but at Pet Supplies younger people predominated in February and this was more marked by October. Although the main concern at the start of the pilots was with uptake amongst younger people, it is worth considering whether a younger culture is becoming established at Pet Supplies that might deter people in the older age groups from joining the enterprise.

In terms of ethnicity, all service users recorded at Rethink Graphics and Rethink Distribution were White and at these services ongoing monitoring and efforts to engage other groups are important. People

from BME groups were using the other enterprises, but the numbers were small with little indication of real increases, so ongoing efforts are equally important at those enterprises.

The recording of goals at the enterprises indicated that service users were being enabled to achieve vocational goals, while the data for status following placement indicated that some were moving on to other vocational activity. Of 23 people recorded as moving on, 20 (87%) were recorded as moving into voluntary work, the employment specialist service or paid work, although paid work was an outcome for only three people.

Where their development as social enterprises is concerned, it was clear from the focus group data that Rethink Graphics and Rethink Distribution were closer to the social enterprise model at the beginning of the pilots than Pet Supplies or Stepping Stones, and were therefore in a stronger business position to start with. The monitoring and outcomes strands of the evaluation were not designed to address business development, and no clear picture emerged about how Pet Supplies is developing as an enterprise. However, the two comments on the follow up questionnaire from people at Stepping Stones do highlight the same issues raised during the focus groups about the extent to which this project can develop as an enterprise, given its origins and location. Although it has to be borne in mind that the views of the two people who commented may not be representative of service users' views more generally, taken together with the focus group results they do suggest that the role of Stepping Stones in the context of the new day and employment services is one of the more pressing issues that needs consideration.

The monitoring data did indicate that both Stepping Stones and Pet Supplies were enabling service users to achieve goals at a higher rate than the other enterprises, but it is not clear whether this is a function of different approaches to recording goals at the enterprises, or whether it may reflect a greater readiness to achieve goals amongst longer term users of the pre-existing services.

Other issues that were beyond the scope of the evaluation but that are relevant to the development of the employment services are the implications of the economic recession and the service developments taking place in primary care.

The economic recession will almost certainly impact on the job opportunities available to service users, and may well also affect people's aspirations if they feel their ambitions are unlikely to be achieved. It will be important for employment services to hold on to hope through the hard times, to continue efforts to secure those opportunities that are available for their service users and to ensure that

effective services remain in place for when the economy begins to recover. In the meantime, it would be useful to monitor the impact of the recession on the local labour market and to consider what steps might need to be taken should it prove to have a deep and prolonged impact.

The developments in primary care that are relevant for the employment services include the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) initiative, the introduction of community employment specialists in some localities, and the piloting in Thurrock of an employment advisor based in a GP surgery. It seems important to make links with these developments in order to identify gaps and overlaps in service provision, and to identify ways in which the different services might work together.

6. Conclusions and suggestions for further development

Our overall conclusion is that for the most part the pilot day and employment services have developed well over the pilot period. Based on the evaluation results, three suggestions of relevance for *all services* are:

1. That commissioners and providers review the project monitoring system to ensure the data collected can be processed for use in supporting service development.
2. That data on ethnicity are systematically collected at all projects and continue to be monitored.
3. That baseline and outcome questionnaires are linked using anonymous identifiers in any further outcome studies.

For the most part, *day services* were proving successful with high levels of satisfaction amongst service users. Suggestions regarding the further development of day services are:

1. For community bridge building services to consider the extent to which people are being supported to engage with their local communities as individuals rather than as groups of service users.
2. For individual services to consider ways of ensuring a more equitable service user profile in terms of:
 - The age profile at the Rise services
 - The gender profile at the Brentwood Mind community bridge building service

- The current predominance of white middle-aged male service users at Panorama House.
3. For Basildon Mind and Rise in particular to continue efforts to enable dissatisfied service users to meet their needs through the new services or through other local services such as those for older people.

The *befriending services* are fulfilling the potential of this type of service already demonstrated by Good Companions. Suggestions for further development are:

1. For both services to consider whether and how more men might be encouraged to take up their service.
2. For Thurrock Mind to consider how people from BME groups can be engaged, given the ethnic profile of mental health service users in the locality.

The *employment specialist service* is clearly fulfilling the potential of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach and is reaching an appropriate range of service users, including an above average proportion of people from BME groups. Our only suggestion here is that such a successful service should be maintained and expanded as needed to meet demand.

At the *social enterprises*, development over the pilot period reflected the different starting points in terms of business development. Issues for consideration are:

1. The role of Stepping Stones in the context of modernised day and employment services.
2. How to engage BME service users in proportion to their representation within the different localities
3. Other aspects of the service user profiles in terms of:
 - The gender balance at Stepping Stones and Rethink Distribution
 - The age profile at Stepping Stones
 - Whether the younger age profile at Pet Supplies may be deterring people in older age groups.

Further suggestions for the *employment services* are:

1. To monitor the impact of the recession on the local labour market and to consider whether changes are needed should the impact be deep and prolonged.

2. To build links with primary care workers in relevant roles in order to identify service gaps, overlaps and ways of working together.