Placement Report

Involves Yorkshire and Humber

and

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Action Trackers project
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Summary

The aim of the project undertaken, Action Trackers, was to research the impact of the welfare reforms implemented in April 2013 on voluntary and community organisations (VCO) and the communities they serve in Yorkshire and Humber.

The reforms affected around half a million people in the region receiving various types of benefits. Using mixed methodology, this project assessed the level of familiarity and preparation for the reforms in the community, their short term and long term projected impacts and actions by voluntary and community groups in reaction to the reforms, particularly good practice cases.

The results offer valuable policy implications by showing specifically whether, where and why there is a lack of information regarding the new policies in the region. Also, the study showed where problems may arise both in the long and short run, which may be useful for policy makers when they are considering possible modifications or additions to the current policies.

Research carried out

My responsibilities were to draw a specific plan for the research project and the methodology that will be used as well as implementing the research and assessing the results and writing up.

During my first month, I gathered secondary data on the benefit system in the region. During the next two months, I analysed the secondary data for the purpose of this research. During the third and fourth month of my placement I put together a survey that was implemented across the region to VCOs. I also analysed the survey. The work during the fifth and sixth month was contacting VCOs in order to get a sample for the case studies part of the project, and doing interviews for the case studies, as well as writing up the key findings. The final month of my placement was spent on writing up all the parts of the project and providing a report.
Impact, outcome, future research

The project report is being launched this week and is expected to benefit VCOs in the region as well as nationally, but also policy makers who will use it as a resource when discussing the impact of the welfare reforms in Yorkshire and Humber.

The report will be freely available (in short and long version) from Involve Yorkshire and Humber. The project is expected to continue by doing a second round of surveys and extending the case studies part of the report by accessing more VCOs and their experiences related to the welfare reform. Also, a parliamentary launch is planned where the key findings from the report will be presented to MP’s.

Key learning benefits from the placement

Primarily, I learned about the VCOs operating in the region and their work for the wider community. It was an honour to be a part of Involve, which is an inspirational organisation driven by exceptional individuals working for a better society.

Secondly, I familiarised myself with the current welfare reform and the policy debates that surround it. It was great to be a part of this debate and to give a contribution which hopefully will be useful, especially for the region.

Finally, I had the opportunity to apply my research skills, but to also develop them further by engaging in a mixed methods project.