

Project matches young jobseekers with firms

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ORGANISERS of a new scheme say they believe it can make a real difference to youth unemployment in the North East.

Business improvement company NE1's new project, NE1 Can, will put

young people seeking employment or training directly into contact with any of the 1,400 companies which already work with the organisation.

With the companies involved able to offer everything from work experiences and internships to detailed, specific advice about the skills and qualifications they're looking for in their employees, organisers of the

scheme hope it will go a long way to tackling the skills gap in the region.

Chief executive Sean Bullick explained: "There's any number of QUANGOs and skills bodies out there but what we've got is 14,000 businesses, and a whole lot of unemployed kids. We're already in touch with both groups, and we can put them together.

The scheme is expected to come out far cheaper than many of its rivals. Previous NE1-run projects are estimated to have spent around £300 per job or training opportunity they've created, compared to some Government schemes with Mr Bullick says can cost more than £10,000 per job.

And with skilled workers being ploughed back into the local economy, organisers are confident it will be

more than worth the investment.

It will cover a whole range of skills and career paths, from pointing people towards careers in retail to helping them become doctors.

The project follows on from a previous NE1 scheme, called Space2, which extended into the city centre just a year ago, and offered young people a social space where they were then offered vital skills training.

Now, Mr Bullick claims the physical centre is no longer necessary, having already done its job of putting the organisation in touch with large numbers of young people looking for work - those overheads can now be lost and money ploughed directly into getting people jobs.

He said: "The absolute focus is on matching these businesses up with these kids.

"The ability of businesses to say 'this is what I want' - everything from dress code to communication skills to qualifications - allows that young person to know what they need to do."

Young people looking for work can be pointed towards NE1 through their schools or a range of other organisations, or can find out about the project's work on the NE1 website.

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Sean Bullick



Claire McKie

► Chief Executive for NE1 Ltd, Sean Bullick