



## **SHIELD** **(Systems for Handling Innovative Enterprise in Local Development)**

The above programme was run in two Business Link areas (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and Sussex) from April 04 to June 05. The programme is designed to support individuals who would like to work for themselves, but do not have an initial business idea. The programme delivered by Excalibur (UK) Ltd, combines a mixture of workshops supported by a comprehensive work book and other learning materials, and one to one support through face to face and telephone/emails.

The programme which was taken up by 81 individuals ( 43 in MKOB and 38 in Sussex) which resulted in 13 companies trading by the end of the project and a further 11 planning to launch within the next 12 months.

Feedback from the participants was extremely positive , key results being

- The development of more positive attitudes,
- Improvement in planning and organisational skills
- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Development of business skills in general

In addition referral to other support agencies was a positive outcome of the programme and there have been requests for the programme to be run again. .

Excalibur were extremely professional in the way they delivered the programme, were constantly evaluating feedback from the Business Links and participants to meet changing needs, and make improvements ( e.g. e- based learning materials) and the one to one support they provided was exemplary, going beyond what was expected. It is clear that they are committed to supporting this client group and have a significant expertise in doing so.

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