

LSIS Supported Provider Collaborative Development projects

LSIS funded Getting People into Work projects

Provider end of project report: July 2012

Project Title: Generating positive employment outcomes for young people with disabilities

Section 1: Introduction

Outline of own organisation, provider partners, and the project aims and objectives.

Remploy is one of the UK's leading providers of employment services and employment to people experiencing complex barriers to work. We enable individuals to identify, develop and make the most of their abilities to enjoy rewarding and fulfilling work.

We do this by working with many leading employers to support disabled people into jobs in mainstream employment and by directly employing disabled people in our Enterprise Businesses.

The aim of our project was to generate positive employment outcomes for young people with disabilities living in Yorkshire and Humber. We wanted to bring together Further Education providers and supported employment providers to improve the way in which young people progress from education into employment, by identifying and acting upon specific opportunities to improve the processes and linkages.

To achieve the project aims we have worked in partnership with:

- Sheffield College;
- Leeds City College;
- The Skills Partnership; and
- Barnsley College.

Whilst collectively agreeing the project aim, each provider identified a specific opportunity to explore resulting in the following objectives.

Remploy/ The Skills Partnership (TSP)

- Pilot the delivery of Level 2 Customer Services qualification by TSP to Remploy client base at the Sheffield Branch before July 2012.
- Develop referral paths for Remploy clients to progress to Apprenticeships with TSP.

Remploy/ Sheffield College

- Delivery of Level 1 Work Skills unit by Remploy staff at the Sheffield Remploy Branch under the umbrella of Sheffield College's own

accreditation.

- Delivery of Level 2 Contact Centre Skills qualifications to Remploy clients by Sheffield College.

Leeds City College

- Delivery of 'Pre-Employment' training to students with learning difficulties by Remploy to commence at Leeds City College from September 2012.

Barnsley College

- Delivery of work experience opportunities at the Remploy Sheffield Factory for disabled students from Barnsley College.

The project emerged because outside of some specific project activity, we knew that there was an opportunity to support disabled young people better if supported learning providers and Further Education providers worked in partnership. We could see that young people were dropping out of the education system into the not in education, employment or training (NEET) category before being able to access the support that Remploy can provide.

We knew that with the right people involved, we could find solutions to this, using our collective knowledge and skills to support these young people better.

At the outset the project was concerned with exploring innovative approaches to building working relationships between Remploy and Further Education providers. There was little by way of comparative data as a starting point. Whilst there were pockets of good practice, there was little data to demonstrate the following.

- Remploy clients had a clear pathway to Apprenticeship provision.
- Remploy clients achieved qualifications as an outcome of in-house training received whilst with Remploy.
- Disabled learners had access to the support Remploy can offer either during or after completing further education programmes without having to drop into the NEET pool.

Section 2: Activities

The first workshop was planned during a period of harsh weather conditions in Yorkshire meaning the attendance was lower than expected. However it worked in our favour as it resulted in a focused meeting with some clear resulting actions.

The workshop identified the following opportunities.

- Work experience at the Remploy factories for disabled learners.
- Delivery of education leading to qualifications for Remploy clients.
- Progression routes for Remploy clients to work-based Apprenticeships.

TSP decided to focus on the delivery of qualifications and progression routes for Remploy learners and with two key decision makers in attendance, the plan was put into place immediately. TSP staff would deliver Level 2 Customer Service qualifications on Remploy premises for appropriate clients.

Barnsley College identified a potential opportunity to provide work experience placements for disabled learners with further meetings arranged to explore this in more detail.

By the second workshop in March 2012, Sheffield College and Leeds City College agreed to participate in the project.

Sheffield College recognised that existing training delivered by Remploy staff could be mapped with relative ease to the Level 1 Work Skills Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) unit with the College providing the quality assurance framework to support good quality delivery. They also saw an opportunity to offer Remploy clients the opportunity to attend their pre-employment programme for the contact centre industry.

Leeds City College could see the value in utilising the expertise of Remploy in working with disabled learners.

By the third workshop, a representative from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and The Source had joined us to understand more about the project and future plans.

The focus for the period of the project was on the TSP and Sheffield College projects, with Barnsley and Leeds City Colleges due to commence in September 2012.

After a period of planning, the delivery of qualifications to Remploy clients commenced in April 2012 and is ongoing (specific details can be found in the 'Impact' section). Referral opportunities into Apprenticeships has started and whilst numbers are low, this is considered by all involved to be an excellent step forward for this group of young people with plans to extend this further in the future.

The project has been very fluid in terms of provider engagement and scoping project content. What have not changed has been the project aim and a clear focus on improving the prospects of disabled learners. If we had closed the doors on providers joining us beyond March 2012, we would not have had the valuable input of Sheffield and Leeds City Colleges to add to that of TSP and Barnsley College.

Section 3: Working in partnership

As Remploy has worked on other projects with Further Education providers, knowing who to contact was not difficult. What we initially found more

challenging was engaging more than one providers to make changes to working practices in a project with tight timescales and some difficult weather conditions!

This became easier as the project gained momentum.

The partners involved have worked extremely well together. All representatives were either decision makers or had delegated decision making authority which allowed the initial workshops to be action centred and more latterly, providing a full account of each project at workshops designed to update on progress. We were delighted to have some of our partners join us at the LSIS celebration event to share their good work.

The advice we would give to future providers looking to work in partnership is as follows.

- Keep the number of providers involved low if your goal is to take action rather than simply share experiences and ideas. It allows for action-focused workshops and speed of decision making when project timescales are tight.
- Ensure you have decision makers involved from the outset.
- Be open minded to new participants and ideas that may help you achieve the project aim.

Section 4: Impact

To date, the project has resulted in the following impact.

- Twelve Remploy clients have successfully completed by Level 2 Customer Service, seven of whom have gone into employment.
- Thirty four Remploy clients have successfully completed Level 1 Work Skills.
- Eight Remploy clients have successfully completed a Level 2 in Contact Centre Skills.
- Two Remploy clients have progressed to work-based Apprenticeships delivered by TSP.

We have established some excellent partnership relationships, which we continue with and build on to expand the activity beyond the Yorkshire and Humber area.

Section 5: Success and challenges

Whilst it is early days, we feel that we have moved a significant way towards achieving our project aim by moving young people nearer to the employment market as a result of improving access to opportunities, building confidence and providing the infrastructure by which they can gain credible qualifications.

We are delighted that nine clients have already benefited by moving into

employment.

Most importantly, we understand the flexibilities which now exist in Further Education funding mean that it is not insurmountable that we can work in partnership with providers to support this learner group.

The key to the projects success has been the calibre of the partners involved, and their willingness to try out new ways of working.

The main issue we have had to overcome along the way is improving our understanding of the most effective ways to utilise funding routes to achieve our aim and objectives and most importantly, ensure the activities are sustainable beyond the life of the project. The complexity of making sure we are using Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funding appropriately has at times been a source of frustration for all concerned. The knowledge and expertise of the providers involved has been invaluable in helping us to overcome this.

Section 6: Resources produced by the project

We have provided LSIS with case studies which give details on all activities to date with comments and photographs of the learners who have been most affected by this project.

They are available to anyone who would like to understand more about working with supported learning providers or as motivational resources for their own learners with disabilities to show what can be achieved.

If anyone reading this would like us to deliver a 30 minute webinar outlining how further education providers can work successfully with supported employment providers we would be happy to deliver this.

Section 7: Future planning

We have plans in place to continue to work with all of the providers involved in the project to either expand on the activities by moving them beyond the Yorkshire and Humber region or commence work on those that are due to start in September 2012 with Barnsley College and Leeds City College.

The project has helped the team at Remploy to understand the value we can add to the education of young disabled people with our links with employers nationally and our knowledge and expertise in working with this group. We already have ideas around how we can build on this going forward based on our learning during the project.

The support provided by LSIS allowed us to bring providers together to develop solutions that can be mainstream funded and therefore sustainable in

the longer term. We would not have known this or found ways to streamline the processes without this project.

Section 8: Contact details

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