

Supporting unemployed people into work through a sector based work academy

Medway Council

Some people face barriers to moving into work, and not everyone has recent experience or qualifications to support them. However, people from all kinds of backgrounds can have the right values to work in our sector as well as bring a wealth of diverse skills, experiences, perspectives and ideas to your workforce.

Medway Council supported local unemployed people to start working in the sector by setting up a sector based work academy and supporting them through a pre-employment training programme, which included work experience.

As a result of one cohort, 13 people completed the programme and five have already secured work with health and social care employers.

Here, they tell us what they did.

In Medway we wanted to support the sector with their recruitment, and at the same time, support unemployed people to access jobs in health and social care.

With funding from Health Education England (HEE) we set up a six week pre-employment programme for local unemployed people. It would give them:

- a nationally recognised qualification
- basic care skills
- employability training, such as CV writing and interviewing practice
- health and social care work placement.

What they did

We worked with Chatham Jobcentre Plus to find suitable learners for the programme. We used a values-based approach to our recruitment to ensure we found people who are the right fit for social care, including exploring candidate's values and behaviours in a face to face interview.

Successful learners did a four week training programme which included the accredited qualification Level 1 Award in Introduction to Adult Social Care and skills training such as moving and handling, emergency first aid and dementia. They also received employability support to develop their self-esteem, workplace expectations and behaviours, interviewing experience and CV writing.

At the end of the training, learners did a two week work placement in health and social care.

The council worked with the pre-employment manager at Health Education England, Kent, Surry and Sussex, (HEE KSS) and the locality manager at Skills for Care to find employers to offer the placements.

What they achieved

13 learners completed the programme which has built their experience and developed their skills. They also gained a good insight into the social care environment through the work placement, so they feel more confident applying for roles.

Five delegates have moved into employment as a direct result of the programme. They're across health and social care organisations and we've had positive feedback from employers. The remaining delegates are applying for roles and are much more confident as a result.

Offering the work placement is a great opportunity for employers to find new recruits who have the right values and skills, and have realistic expectations about what it's like to work in social care.

The People Care Team, a domiciliary care provider and live-in care provider, were one of the employers who offered a work placement. They found that they sometimes struggled to recruit, and when they did get applications, candidates weren't always suitable.

They got involved in the programme because they liked the structured training sessions and employability support that learners get.

Five students were referred to The People Care Team for work placements; some were recent school leavers and others had been out of work for some time.

One of these learners was Eva*. Eva has two young children, had been out of work for a period of time and was struggling to get back into employment. She also didn't drive and was concerned this might be a barrier to working for a home-care provider. However, The People Care Team took a flexible approach and were able to pair Eva with a colleague who drives, so she could complete her work placement.

At the end of the placement a job opportunity was available and they encouraged Eva to apply. The programme supported Eva to write her CV and practice her interview technique – she applied for the role and was successful.

They offered Eva a position where she could walk round local people's houses, and she's been employed at The People Care Team ever since.

Jane Prentice, Registered Manager at The People Care Team, says



Pre-employment programmes are almost like 'free' recruitment with no overheads. On top of that, we're able to see first-hand how individuals perform in shadowing opportunities, including interaction with clients.



"We now run similar schemes once or twice a year for up to five students – even if we're not able to offer job opportunities at the time, it's hoped that a positive work-based experience might encourage individuals to consider a career in care elsewhere or in the future".

Lessons learnt

Many of the attendees had low self-confidence and little work experience, for a variety of reasons. Using a 'strengths-based' coaching tool during early training sessions helped people to see what skills they already had and which were transferable to the workplace.

We promoted the programme widely through Jobcentre Plus, children's centres, Royal British Legion Industries and Welfare to Work providers.



We used a values-based approach to recruitment to ensure that successful candidates displayed the desired behaviours and values to work in social care. This has resulted in excellent retention and success rates.



For more information please visit:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/seeingpotential

Skills for Care recommends

[Finding and keeping workers](#)

This online toolkit has practical tips and resources to help you find and keep workers with the right values.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/finderskeepers

[Values-based recruitment](#)

Taking this approach can help you get the right people to work in your organisation, and save time and resources in recruiting the wrong people.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/values

[I Care...Ambassadors](#)

Nominate your staff to be ambassadors and deliver careers activities to inspire more people to work in adult social care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ica



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