

‘Healthy Futures Project’ Unique Personnel (UK) Ltd

Unique Personnel (UK) Ltd offer a comprehensive range of home care services including domiciliary, respite, companionship and live-in care to the elderly and to young people with a disability. They recently achieved a rating of ‘Good’ from CQC, and have the Investors in People kite mark and are members of UKHCA.

Starting in January 2018, the Capital City College Group involved Unique Personnel in the ‘Healthy Futures Project’ that is funded through European Social Funding (ESF) and co-funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Led by the JGA Group, the project engages with unemployed individuals in the Central and South London areas and supports them into sustained employment within the health and social care sector.

What we wanted to achieve

Paul Nelson Kasozi, Registered Manager at Unique Personnel in Brixton, explains why they became involved in the project:

Unique Personnel is expanding and we’re finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff. Through the project we wanted to recruit the ‘right’ local people who had the ‘right’ values to work in this sector with the view of upskilling new recruits and ensuring that they are competent.

What we did

We were keen to employ more people from the local community which is dominated by the Somalian population and who were under-represented in our current workforce but a significant part of the local community. We made contact with the local Mosque and built an excellent relationship and rapport with the leaders and members.

We recruited 100 people with an interest in working in the health and social care sector. All 100 recruits started flexible training courses that included an introduction to the health and social care sector, as well as subjects such as hygiene, infection control, equality and diversity and dementia care. In addition, recruits also received help with skills such as CV development, confidence building, communication which would help their employability, as well as shadowing experienced carers for one week to enable them to get a ‘real feel’ for the work involved.

What we achieved

The project was a huge success as it contributed to increased contact hours which improved the level of care and support customers received and resolved Unique Personnel's general recruitment shortage.

As well as bringing about a positive benefit to Unique Personnel's recruitment objectives and people receiving care and support, it also transformed the lives of people like Aisha who is now employed as a carer at Unique Personnel.

What happened?

Aisha was born in Mogadishu in Somalia where she looked after her younger siblings after her mother had to flee alone to Denmark during the civil war. She came to London when she was 17 and was soon widowed with a young child to care for. Aisha has since remarried and now has five children.

Aisha joined the project through her local Mosque after attending an information session. She'd been unable to finish her secondary education and lacked confidence in engaging and seeking work. The project offered Aisha the chance to learn new skills and gain accredited qualifications. She was keen to use her skills to provide care and support to others.

The training course and work shadowing really helped her understand the responsibilities of caring for someone in their home, as well as fully appreciate the importance of health and safety and safeguarding. Aisha went on to gain employment, and is now working approximately 20 hours per week.

Working as a carer has changed me a lot, your clients are human beings who deserve to be treated with compassion, dignity and respect. It's a lot of responsibility which requires both emotional and physical support. It's my duty to report things when they aren't right not just as a carer but when I'm out and about. I've seen how vulnerable people can be and the trust they place in you. I'm learning every day.

What advice would you give to others?

You need to communicate, manage feelings and have a good attitude. Caring is about looking after people – think about your own family members. The people I work with have big hearts, take care to talk to them. Be gentle, be safe.

The benefits to Unique Personnel

Our staff are motivated, have more confidence and feel part of the community. We have a good representation from the Somalian population on our workforce who feel more empowered to seek further education and employment opportunities. Most importantly, our customers are happy – with one saying "I can never have better carers than the ones I have."

The key achievements of the project

- 100 individuals recruited onto the project
- 79 achieved an accredited qualification
- 26+ are now employed and work an average of 10-16 hours per week
- 10 are still in employment after six months

The project contributed to us achieving a 'Good' rating in a recent CQC inspection, the inspectors were happy with our recruitment process and the support offered to staff. They noted that employee and employer relationships were good.

What we learnt

We learnt about the positive power of partnership working and will sustain our relationship with local stakeholders. The project has been really rewarding for the company, for local people and ultimately for our customers.

Taking things forward

We've fostered really good local relationships that will continue to grow. We will also replicate this model to other areas in London in order to fulfil our expanding employment needs and support the local community.

In partnership with:



For more information please visit:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/seeingpotential

www.unique-personnel.com

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](http://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](http://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](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ica)