

Future Tense!

Bury EST faces an uncertain future as we come towards the end of the successful Embracing Diversity project. With four months to go, it is looking likely that we may be faced with the loss of both the care-leaver and ethnicity services as well as a cut back in both the learning disability and mental health services.

Government policy is firmly behind what the service is achieving and Bury EST has picked up some very favourable comments from social care inspectors. Despite this, it appears that there may be major funding problems through 2005 onwards.

Since hearing that we were unsuccessful in a bid for further European funding, the team has been applying for funding from Bury Primary Care Trust, the North West Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and others. At this stage, it's looking like we've exhausted all avenues and it is expected that up to nine staff members will be leaving the service in May.

National concern over funding

The situation is reflected across the country where supported employment services are being squeezed financially as a result of changes to

European funding which is now distributed by the Learning + Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus. Manager, Huw Davies, will be seeking meetings with the national LSC and regional Jobcentre Plus manager to discuss the situation.

Little impact of initiatives

Despite a range of Welfare to Work initiatives, little progress has been made in the employment rates for disabled people. Both the Valuing People programme for people with a learning disability and the National Service Framework for people with mental health problems have placed an emphasis on employment support but have not made any resources available to achieve their goals. Employment rates for people with a learning disability are under 10% even though a recent survey found that over 60% of people would like a job. Bury EST is calling for the formation of regional strategic groups to address the problem and encourage better coordination between providers, the LSC and Jobcentre Plus.

A recent Government report has asked for more action to support people from minority ethnic communities into work and yet Jobcentre Plus funding has stood idle due to internal confusion and delays.

Occupational health needs

The new public health white paper, 'Choosing Health' contains a 22 page section on work and health that looks at occupational health, vocational rehabilitation and the employment of people with disabilities, particularly those with mental health needs. Bury EST's innovative job retention service has proved very successful and popular with GPs at the Redbank health centre in Radcliffe but funding to continue and expand the service is in doubt.

We hope to continue our successful Employer Forum on Diversity though it seems unlikely that we will be able to retain our employer consultant, Fred Bowen.

The only glimmer of hope is for the care-leaver service where Bury EST staff have contributed to raising the numbers of local care-leavers involved in education, training and employment. It is hoped that funding may be found to continue at least one post.

Continued efforts are planned in an effort to minimise the effect on services and disruption to our clients and we'll bring you more information in our next newsletter.

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CONTACTING US

We welcome your feedback about the newsletter or the service you have received from Bury EST. We are always looking for stories or events we could attend.

Please contact us on:

0161 761 4662

Alternatively visit our website:

www.buryest.org.uk

BURY REPRESENTED AT PERSONNEL CONFERENCE

The Embracing Diversity project celebrated success at the Annual Conference of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in Harrogate, October 2004. Representatives from Bury EST and Stockport Employment Services attended over the three days together with employer representatives from Marks & Spencer, Greater Manchester Police, Stockport NHS and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council who lent a hand on our stand.

Personnel managers sharing their experiences of the project with exhibition delegates included Steve Mason (Greater Manchester Police), Carmel McKeogh (Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council), Liz Dickenson and Luci Foster (M&S) and Vicky Stewart (NHS).

The Annual Conference attracted over 7000



This was the first CIPD conference that Supported Employment service providers had been represented at. The event provided a perfect opportunity to talk to personnel

This is especially poignant with recent changes to the Disability Discrimination Act which mean employers have to be even more circumspect with their recruitment policies and practises.

Several specialist training organisations also exhibiting at the CIPD conference came to discuss diversity issues with us and became aware of the potential of supported employment. One company, Diverse Culture, invited us to speak at a conference in Leeds attended by Home Office Minister, Fiona MacTaggart. Bury EST's Tracey Pennant gave a well received presentation at the event which focussed on employment and minority ethnic communities.

Our future plans include working with the regional CIPD branch on events and presentations to student groups and to strengthen the links we already have with local forums.



Huw Davies, Service Manager at Bury EST thought the event was,

“a huge success. We had delegates from all over the country and every conceivable business background. It was great to share our views and experiences with such a large audience”.

delegates over the three days and we gave out information packs to 1350 people during the exhibition which really isn't bad going. There were over 350 exhibitors for delegates to visit spread over 5 halls and 50 seminars presented by 110 guest speakers for delegates to attend. All in all a jam-packed event with plenty of interest in our stand and one that was definitely a great experience to be involved in.

The CIPD is the professional body for personnel managers in the UK and we have developed close links with the regional association. Our stand was often crowded with managers from different companies discussing diversity in the workplace and we've got some leads to follow up.

managers representing a wide range of public and private sector employers. Sharing experiences and presenting case studies on a regional and national basis is a key element to the future success of organisations in responding to the current agenda of managing and valuing the diversity of their workforces.

Tracey Pennant, Employment Officer, represented Ethnicity and Mental Health,

“The event was worth attending and promoted the service well. It gave a good insight into other peoples' views of what diversity actually is.

We were also able to network with other organisations such as Jobcentre Plus over the three days.”



DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 2004

What Does it Mean For You?

As from 1st October 2004 there have been changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which require businesses and organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people to access services. Originally introduced in 1995 the DDA aims to end the discrimination which many disabled people face in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, facilities and services
- buying or renting land or property

The 2004 additions to the Act have added to the development of legislation to improve the rights of disabled people. This may mean to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding physical features of a building which make access impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people.

Examples include:

- putting in a ramp to replace steps
- providing larger, well defined signs for people with a visual impairment
- improving access to toilet or washing facilities

Guidance for local businesses

Businesses that provide a service to the public, whether they charge for it or not, have duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

If you are a disabled person, they cannot refuse to serve you or provide you with a lower standard of service to you because of your disability, unless it can be justified. They may also need to make reasonable changes to the way in which they provide their services to make sure that they don't discriminate against you as a customer. This may mean they will have to provide their service by a reasonable alternative means. For example, if you are shopping, the shop staff should bring goods to you

or help you find items.

They will not be required to make changes which are impractical or beyond their means.

Examples of reasonable physical changes

These may include:

- ensuring premises are well lit, where appropriate, and providing well-defined signs
- installing an induction loop for people with a hearing impairment
- installing a permanent ramp and a handrail at the entrance to a building where there are steps
- providing an accessible area, for example, a low level desk in a bank - for wheelchair users.

Further details on the new DDA can be found at www.drc-gb.org

EMPLOYERS FORUM

Bury EST recently hosted a Recruitment and Selection workshop at the Bolholt Country Park Hotel to discuss barriers and solutions for people from disadvantaged backgrounds in finding employment. Employers from Bury EST's Employer Forum on Diversity met with representatives from our client focus groups to learn about the difficulties people from disadvantaged backgrounds can face in finding suitable jobs.

Lack of work experience, qualifications, basic skills and confidence can deter some candidates from applying in the first place. The difficulties of applying and the interview process can mean again that potential job seekers will miss out on securing suitable positions. For employers there is also a missed opportunity because they are unable to recruit from the widest pool of available talent.

Employers and clients got their heads together to come up with a range of innovative and practical solutions to remove



barriers to job recruitment. Suggestions included employer community recruitment initiatives and alternatives to the traditional selection process such as working interviews, work tasters, and job trials. Employers were also encouraged to re-visit their job specifications and consider if the qualifications or experience they require are excluding potentially suitable job applicants.

As Fred Bowen, Bury EST's Employer Consultant commented "Employers who

attended the workshop really valued the opportunity to learn about the recruitment needs of Bury EST's clients as they represent the diverse profile of the quality workforce they want to recruit."

There are further Employer Forum events running throughout 2005, for further details on these please contact Fred Bowen on:

0161 761 4662

Ethnicity and Employment

Bury EST is working in partnership with the Asian Development Association of Bury (ADAB) to combat inequality and discrimination in the labour market. Asghar and Zerqa, Placement Officers from Bury EST are co-located and based at the ADAB office in the heart of East Bury. Minority ethnic communities make up 6% of the Bury population. The largest community is from Pakistan making up approximately 6000 people and there are also about 630 asylum seekers mainly from conflict zones.



Barriers and Issues

The ethnic minority groups face many issues affecting employment which could include:

- language and communication issues
- a low level of basic skills
- a lack of knowledge of the services available to them
- and cultural issues

The barriers to employment for this group are intrinsically the same to many of those faced by the other client groups that Bury EST work with. However there are additional factors that must also be taken into consideration:

- bureaucratic barriers such as work permits or the recognition of overseas qualifications
- cultural and gender issues
- difficulties in engaging this client group
- isolation
- low motivation with a desire for a 'quick fix'

The type of support we provide varies with the needs of the client. Some people just need general advice and guidance and help completing CV's and applications whilst others

need more intensive support depending on the issues involved. One of the essential roles of ADAB is a development of multi agency support systems so that assistance and encouragement is available to the clients every step of the way.

Supported Employment Model

Used by the Embracing Diversity project the Supported Employment Model has featured in previous newsletters. ADAB uses referral systems and is constantly trying to find new ways of offering suitable support. There is signposting where it is needed with a named contact at agencies such as Jobcentre Plus. Another service that ADAB offer is discrete workplace support whether it is in new employment or retaining an existing job. Support when required is one of the most important factors to ADAB's success. Clients shouldn't feel alone and any problems or questions can be swiftly solved or talked through by the team so that a client can feel secure and look towards a positive future.

Progress to date

The work of ADAB although in its early stages has had several successes already:

- jobs have been secured
- ADAB has a seat on a multi-agency forum for asylum seekers and care-leavers
- client focus groups have been set up to encourage feed back
- strong community links have been established
- the work of ADAB has been presented to the Embracing Diversity Employer Forum with much interest.

What Does the Future Hold?

With European funding due to end in May 2005, mainstream funding is now a priority so that the service can remain in place beyond May.

Jobcentre Plus has an ethnic minority flexibility fund and we are working with them to identify possible funding for the scheme though it appears that this funding may only be temporary. With the Government calling for more action to encourage higher employment rates and business start-ups within minority ethnic communities we can only hope that funding will become available shortly.

For further information please contact either Asghar Ali or Zerqa Ahmed on 0161 761 4662.

How Bury EST helped Aisha:

Aisha has been a client of Bury EST for about 3 years. Following a variety of health problems and long term unemployment, Aisha found herself suffering from low self esteem, depression and a low level of confidence.

Aisha had a very difficult time seeking employment. She found it difficult to concentrate and give her full attention to any type of work related activity.

With Bury EST's help Aisha started a work placement in November 2002 as an administration assistant at the Asian Development Association of Bury (ADAB). It was from here that Aisha began to think about and form her long term objectives. Her interaction with the general public helped greatly with her confidence and Aisha successfully completed her placement.

Aisha was successfully selected to undertake another work placement at Bury Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) in June 2003. Aisha worked on several mini projects over the summer period. Staff at EYDCP were very supportive and Aisha felt very comfortable and was quickly made to feel part of the team.

Aisha Today:

In September 2003 Aisha returned to EYDCP again on a work placement with a view to a job. In December 2003 she was offered a paid part-time position as a receptionist. Aisha accepted the offer.

Aisha has said she feels, "very happy at work," and the team at EYDCP is, "very friendly and extremely supportive."

According to her manager, Sue Sykes, "Aisha is growing in confidence since she started working on reception. She is reliable, efficient and a valuable member of the team."

Co-worker, Helen also works on reception and has acted as a mentor for Aisha. As Helen puts it, "Aisha is keen to learn and get involved."

A RECRUITING JOB FOR A RECRUIT

Sarah Whitely is a 23 year old who has been involved with Bury EST for 2 years. Sarah was referred to us via the job centre in Bury after exhausting all avenues to find suitable work. Sarah has a condition called Dyspraxia which affects up to 10% of the population (source: The Dyspraxia Foundation). Before joining Sarah felt quite isolated and commented, "Other agencies haven't provided the correct type of support."

During her time with us she has worked with 2 of our placement officers and has successfully completed work placements and a paying job role. Since joining Bury EST Sarah said, "I have really enjoyed working with the team and have grown in confidence".

This really shows when you meet Sarah as she comes across as extremely articulate and sure of herself. She is now the secretary of a dyspraxia society in her spare time and regularly attends conferences around the country.

Sarah is currently undertaking a work placement with Bolton, Salford and Trafford NHS Trust in the recruitment office and is really enjoying it. She has a lot of support within the office and has settled in very quickly.

Sarah has already recommended our service to some of her friends and has found the staff to be, "absolutely fabulous with someone always around to cheer me up."



Really it's in the title. WORKSTEP is a service offered by Bury EST that can help you step by step back into work. You may have previously known it as the "Sheltered Placement Scheme"

Bury EST is now able to support people with disabilities under the WORKSTEP programme. In June, we were successfully awarded a contract for 25 places as part of a 125 place contract for Greater Manchester being run by a consortium of agencies from Oldham, Wigan, Stockport and Bury.

WORKSTEP is a nationally funded scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. It replaces what was previously the "Sheltered Placement Scheme" or "Supported Employment Programme". WORKSTEP encourages progression into open employment and each person going through the scheme will have an individual Development Plan detailing how this is going to be achieved.

We can only take referrals for WORKSTEP through the local Disability Employment Advisors. Currently, this is Julie Connor at Prestwich /Radcliffe jobcentres (0161-253 3302) and John Beech at Bury jobcentre (0161- 253-8060).

Alternatively, you can contact Tony Henson at Bury EST to arrange an informal chat about the programme and we can forward your details to the jobcentre for approval to join WORKSTEP

For further details visit our website www.buryest.org.uk or call us on 0161 761 4662.

A HIT IN THE VILLAGE

Michael Rowley had been working at the Village Hotel in Bury for only a short time when he won employee of the month. Such was his success in his role of canteen cleaner that he works mostly on his own with very little guidance and is thoroughly enjoying the experience.

Michael is 'very shocked to win the award' as he feels there are other staff who have been working there longer than himself who may be more deserving. Obviously that is not the case!

Michael is supported by Workstep which is a Government initiative helping unemployed disabled people back into work.

Sarah Draycott, Human Resource Manager at the Village Hotel was extremely impressed with what he has achieved in such a short space of time and looks forward to him continuing his employment at the Village.



News in brief...

White Paper on Health

Health Secretary John Reid published the new public health white paper, 'Choosing Health' on November 16th. This is the Government's white paper on improving public health in England. The document contains a 22 page section on work and health that looks at occupational health, vocational rehabilitation and the employment of people with disabilities, particularly those with mental health needs. The report is available from the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk

There is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch!

Bury EST's Employer Consultant, Fred Bowen, recently appeared on the BBC's Working Lunch magazine programme. The report concentrated on Fred's change of career and highlighted some of our work with employers and clients. Fred recently won the Bury Chamber Board Member of the Year award 2004. This came as a complete surprise to Fred who was "absolutely delighted" to be presented with this award at the recent North Manchester Chamber Gala Dinner.



Tracey Speaks at Diversity Conference

Tracey Pennant was asked to speak at a conference on employment and race equality in Leeds in December. The event, organised by Diverse Culture, was chaired by the Commissioner of the Commission for Racial Equality and featured a keynote speech from Home Office Minister, Fiona MacTaggart.

Learning Disability Today

Bury EST manager, Huw Davies, spoke at the Learning Disability Today conference and exhibition in London in November. The event brought together service users, providers and policy makers to look at developments around learning disability. Huw gave a national perspective on the state of supported employment.

Hungary for Information

Bury EST was visited recently by representatives from Hungary who run a similar service to ourselves. It was a fact finding trip to learn how Bury EST operates and to see if any of our practices could be copied to further improve the service they currently deliver. We are very proud of our international links with other organisations and we are expecting visitors from the Czech Republic next year.

Huw Davies will also be speaking about our service at a conference and in a televised debate in Poland in January.

Mental Health Awareness Day

Bury EST recently attended a Conference at the Bolholt Country Park Hotel in Bury for World Mental Health Awareness Day on October 10th. World Mental Health Day was observed for the first time on 10 October 1992. It was started as an annual activity of the World Federation for Mental Health by the then Deputy Secretary General Richard Hunter. To find out more about World Mental Health Day please visit www.wmhd.org



(Pictured are Rod Goodwin and Tracey Pennant both from Bury EST)

Sue Joins Workstep Team



We are very pleased to welcome Sue Pearson to the Workstep team. Previously from Education Personnel, we're sure she'll be able to teach the team a lot!

Focus on Young People

Bury EST is represented on a local group looking at how more young people with learning disabilities can be helped into work. The group will be reporting with recommendations to the Connexions Partnership.

Seedfield Café

Bury is pulling out from Seedfield café from next April because of financial pressures. The café provided training opportunities that will now be pursued elsewhere.



Joint Conference 2005

The Association for Supported Employment has now confirmed its annual conference for the 21st and 22nd April at Swansea's Guildhall.

This time it will be a joint conference with the National Association for Supported Employment. The conference will feature workshops and keynote speakers. Further details are available at www.afse.org.uk

Bury Celebrates Diversity

Bury EST was represented at the Celebrating Diversity festival at Bury's Castle Leisure Centre. We felt it was a very successful and enjoyable day so well done to the organisers! Our stall attracted plenty of visitors all day and we were particularly pleased with the number of Asian families who came for a chat about the service.

Top Marks for Bury EST

The Commission for Social Care published a report this year on the services for people with learning disabilities provided by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. Bury EST featured quite a lot in the report with many positive comments. "The Bury Employment Support and Training service was an excellent example of its kind and was to be commended on its work both with individuals and local businesses". High praise indeed!

Employer Forum on Diversity

The date for the next Employer Forum meeting has now been confirmed as 13th April 2005. This will examine the recruitment and retention of ex-offenders. For further information or the dates for future meetings in 2005 please contact Fred Bowen on 0161 761 4662 or visit www.embracingdiversity.org

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