



This project is funded by:



Project Case Study

Computer Gym, Gearing up for Progression

Project Overview

The Gearing up for Progression project works with adults over 18 years old from Greater Manchester that are classed as unemployed or economically inactive. The main aim of the initiative is to support participants to gain sustainable employment in the health and social care sector. The project has been developed to address the needs of employers in the area, providing them with qualified and confident candidates for upcoming job roles.

Training provider, Computer Gym received £150,000 funding for the programme from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as part of its 2007-10 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan.

How it Works

The team at Computer Gym target potential participants by placing adverts in relevant press and online, as well as receiving referrals through their strong relationship with Jobcentre Plus. Individuals that access the programme are assessed, and their aspirations and needs are identified. They are then placed on short courses ranging from two to twelve weeks before progressing on to sessions that will result in formal, recognised qualifications.

The training sessions are delivered locally and at convenient times for the individuals, either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The qualified staff from Computer Gym continuously monitor the progress of participants and adapt the courses as appropriate – ensuring they are suitable for the learners, and relevant to employers.

Individuals are supported through a programme that covers the benefits of working, and reinforcing this ethos underpins the whole of the course content. Alongside these 'social' messages, participants are able to work towards industry recognised qualifications, accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH).

Impact and Success

The project is delivering real results. One hundred individuals have started on the course, with 60 of these now in employment; 11 of the 60 have now sustained employment for 13 weeks, and it is hoped that at least another 35 will become sustained by the end of December 2009. The team is monitoring the participants that have successfully moved into roles, and hopes to be able to measure how many people are able to sustain employment for over 13 weeks, and then past 6 months.

Delia Hodgkiss, Project Manager at Computer Gym comments; "I believe that the project has helped to change the way learners view employment. Learners who originally thought employment was just about money and that courses were good to attend because they were free, now recognise that having a job can completely change their lives, providing a different lifestyle and new opportunities."

The course also includes sessions on meeting new people, financial security and 'a better self' and these are seen as 'added extras', with the qualifications gained through the course being the main factor in securing employment successfully. The achievement of CIEH accreditations set them apart from others when competing for positions in the health and social care sector.

Delia continues; "It's great when a participant comes back from an interview having being successful. They look back over their learning journey and can chart their success in stages, from when they first started to believe in themselves, to when they received their first certificate.

"It has been a real challenge to successfully deliver the project, especially at the start," Delia concludes; "But when you see the difference it makes to the lives of the participants it really is worth it. They openly admit that without the course they wouldn't have been able to get the job they now love."

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