



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

This project is funded by:



Leading learning and skills

Individual Case Study

Greater Merseyside and Halton Routeway to Employment, Greenbank College

Project Overview

The Greater Merseyside and Halton Routeway to Employment project supports people with learning difficulties and helps to introduce them into sustainable employment.

The initiative is of benefit to anyone who has a disability that is acting as a barrier to them progressing in their chosen career. Participants take part in Skills for Life programmes and work placements in order to gain new skills and help increase their confidence.

Greenbank College launched the programme after receiving funding totalling £1.8 million from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as part of its 2007-10 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan.

How it Works

There are 13* partner agencies involved in the project that work closely with organisations across Liverpool and Knowsley to publicise the project and ensure that everyone who is eligible has an equal opportunity to access the service. These organisations include Jobcentre Plus, NHS, colleges, schools and universities, Connexions and private and voluntary sector organisations.

Staff from Greenbank College identify participants' skills gaps, find out about what qualifications are required for a specific role and outline an individual's competence levels before finding them a suitable placement.

More than 100 local employers have pledged their commitment and work closely with the project to offer work placements and help participants find a suitable role

Work-based Learning Manager, Christian Adeniran, says: "The financial support from the LSC and ESF has given us the opportunity to get the project off the ground and to make a tangible difference to people's lives. We can provide realistic and ongoing support for participants and help them realise their potential.

"As part of the initiative, we have set up an employer forum to help local companies learn more about the sorts of opportunities they could offer potential employees with disabilities. We've also discovered it is a useful way to help employers identify any training needs with regards to recruiting staff with specific requirements."

Impact and Success

To date, the project has helped 48 people gain employment, of whom 29 have been in employment for more than three months, with a further 19 in roles, with a view to them becoming permanent. A total of 98 learners have taken part in work placements, at places as diverse as building sites and commercial farms.

Paul Henwood is one person who has secured a job with support from Routeway to Employment. The 26-year-old from Aigburth who suffers from cerebral palsy, had been unemployed for seven months before embarking on the initiative during which he had help to update his CV and the opportunity to practice and improve his interview skills.

Following the project, Paul was offered a job with ELECT, an employment support agency in Liverpool. He's worked there for nine months and is delighted with his new role.

A Liverpool John Moores University History graduate, Paul holds responsibility for reception and administration and says he thoroughly enjoys his job, works with a great team of people and gains pride from knowing he's helping others find employment.

Paul, said: "I knew I was capable and would be an asset to an employer, so I was frustrated when I couldn't find employment. I'm really delighted to have found a job I

love and it's thanks to the Routeway programme that I'm where I am today. They helped me with the final few stages before I was completely ready for employment.

"I feel that the workplace should reflect the wider community and companies shouldn't be afraid of giving a chance to people with disabilities. I know that having a disability can be a barrier to employment but I felt it was my job to make employers see through my disability and let them know I was very capable and the right person for the job."

Christian explains: "When participants first come to us, many are uncomfortable in revealing the true extent of their support needs in relation to literacy, numeracy and employability skills. As these are qualities required by all employers, we put into action a plan to encourage the individual to open up and be realistic about their needs.

"Participants become more aware about the skills they currently possess and what areas they need to develop in order to attain their chosen vocational role. This leads to increased confidence and motivation, whilst also providing a clear path for development."

He adds: "I believe this demonstrates that the project is delivering what it set out to do and bodes very well for the future."

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*Greenbank College

Alt Valley Community Trust

Daisy UK

ELECT (East Liverpool Economic Trust)

Liverpool ADHD Foundation

Merseyside Disability Federation

Merseyside Society for Deaf People

MOWLL (Moving On With Life & Learning)

Network Employment, Mersey Care NHS Trust

Neurosupport

Royal Mencap Society

The Independent Initiative

Merseyside Welfare Rights