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Leading learning and skills

### *Project 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 project 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**

There are currently 275 people enrolled on the project with an expected 375 individuals in total by the end of the project in 2010. To date 48 people have gained employment, of which 29 have been employed 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 including building sites and commercial farms.

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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\*The 13 partner agencies are:

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