



This project is funded by:



Individual Case Study

Bury College Business Solutions, Passport to Employment

Project Overview

Bury College's Passport to Employment project has been set up to help people in Bury and Oldham who are long-term unemployed gain the skills, qualifications and confidence needed to return to work.

The project is aimed at people determined to gain employment, including lone parents or those who have been made redundant after years of working.

Greater Manchester colleges including Bury College and The Oldham College received funding totalling £61,112 from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as part of its 2007-10 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan.

How it works

Established in Spring 2008, the initiative is run by Business Solutions, Bury College's business arm. During the course, participants are encouraged to work on their CVs and personal statements, take part in interviews and learn how to become more confident and ultimately, more employable.

Employment Skills Development Manager for Bury College, Lynne Woods, says: "Many participants who join the course have been made redundant after many years in work or have been unemployed for several months.

“They are often surprised to learn how much their previous experience will help in their search for work so we help them assess their existing skills and look at how they can transfer these to other roles.

“We work on increasing participants’ confidence and assertiveness and give them the tools to gain employment, like up-to-date references. In addition, they can work towards qualifications in IT and food hygiene or numeracy and literacy.”

Impact and Success

43-year-old Elaine Murphy from Bury is just one of the people to have benefited from the three week course and has now gained a job.

Elaine had been unemployed for more than a year and despite having previously worked in pubs, she was finding it difficult to be invited for interview after applying for jobs in supermarkets and shops.

During a meeting at her local Jobcentre Plus, Elaine was told about the Passport to Employment course at Bury College and decided that it provided her with the perfect opportunity to gain some confidence and improve her chances of getting employment.

Elaine explains: “I’m not exactly a shy person but over the years I’d lost my confidence and being unemployed for 12 months really didn’t help. I was very interested in getting a job at my local supermarket but I didn’t know where to start.

“The Passport to Employment course helped me learn how to fill in an application form properly and how to do well in interviews. After so long out of work, I’d almost forgotten what I needed to do but the course helped me remember.”

During the course, Elaine gained a Level 2 in Literacy and Numeracy, learnt about teamwork and how to work on her own and had confidence building sessions to improve her chances of employability. She says that without the course, she would not be where she is today.

Elaine added: "I'd like to think I could've done it on my own but in truth, it would've been unlikely as I was lacking the right qualifications. The Passport to Employment course not only helped me gain formal qualifications but also increased my confidence and I learnt about what I needed to succeed in an interview. I'm really happy as I also made some really good friends on the course who I'm still in contact with."

Elaine is currently working in her local branch of a national supermarket chain on the delicatessen counter and is aiming to be promoted to a supervisory role in the near future.

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