

Employ ULV Seminar Event Summary

Working with People with Disabilities: Pathways to Sustainable Employment

The Employ ULV Framework held the first of the Seminar Series, 'Working with People with Disabilities: Pathways to Sustainable Employment', on the 11th of October 2005 at the Business Innovation Centre in Enfield.

The seminar attracted over 30 individuals from from local training and job brokerage organisations, as well as other local Council and regeneration professionals in and around the Upper Lee Valley sub-region.

This first seminar event was undertaken as a knowledge based information and discussion opportunity on and around employment pathways for people with disabilities. The event covered 3 main topics:

- a. Issues facing disabled people, particularly where it concerns their ability to enter the labour market and to remain in meaningful employment
- b. The need for training and job brokerage providers, as well as employers and organisations working in regeneration to take 'another look' at the statutory regulations and the rights of people with disabilities
- c. To understand the existing provision, established practice, and to provide an opportunity to discuss these topics and to bring both specialist disabilities providers together with other organisations in encouragement of partnership building

The first speaker, **Bill Slade (Haringey Welfare to Work)** spoke about the issues facing disabled people and the need for creating pathways into employment, his approach being encapsulated in a pyramid progression route, starting from the disabled person receiving specialised disability services where needed, to the disabled person entering into employment. A clear understanding of the barriers and gaps within that progression route were also drawn out in the presentation.

Jason Vosa-Baigrie from Jobcentre Plus spoke largely about the services of Jobcentre Plus, the technicalities of Incapacity Benefit and the Welfare to Work activity, as well as pointing out some of the key issues for working together in the future to build pathways into employment.

The third speaker, **Beryl Streader MBE (Jobcentre Plus)** gave us a more subjective perspective on what it was like to working as a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA). She gave some interesting examples and case studies of disabled people she had worked with, and barriers they faced which she had helped them to overcome.

The **Disability Rights Commission's Monica Kreel** spoke about how the Disability Discrimination Act affects the practices of organisations that work within the realm of employment and skills development. With much detailed information provided in the presentation, Monica also gave details of where further advice and support could be accessed. In light of the changes to the law, this presentation is one that should be remembered by all!

Another speaker, **Stephen Robinson (Richmond Fellowship)** spoke about barriers to employment for people with mental health problems, and the methods that Richmond Fellowship have engaged in order to help this group of people into employment. The focus on employment support, job retention, lifestyle support and a networked and integrated approach to delivery, works towards the development of employment pathways and provided good practice information for any organisations that are looking to improve their own practice.

The final Speaker was **Miles Leonard (Ellingham Employment Services)**, who spoke about their job-coach model of employment development for people with learning disabilities. Ellingham provided very useful information on the practical issues of providing support and guidance to individuals as they begin their pathway into employment, and the necessity of reducing their involvement as the individual becomes more engaged, confident and independent further down the path.

If you are interested in reviewing any of these presentations, please go to www.urbanfutures.org.uk/employ to download the presentations and reviews, and to join the discussions.

The Employ ULV Framework team would like to thank you all for attending the event, and look forward to announcing the second in the Seminar Series in the near future.