

Spotlight on training for the unemployed

Supplement to the BIS FE & Skills newsletter – September 2012

Contents

[Why skills?](#) (p.1)

[What makes a great programme](#) (p.2)

[What programmes are available?](#) (pp.2-5)

- [Skills offer for the unemployed](#) (pp.2-3)
- [Sector-based work academies](#) (pp.3-4)
- [The Work Programme](#) (pp.5-6)

[Where does the National Career Service fit in?](#) (p.6)

[Working with the unemployed – useful information](#) (pp.6-7)

Why skills?

One of the most important actions colleges and training providers can take is to help unemployed people get the skills and knowledge they need to get and stay in work and to help employers get access to the skilled labour they need for business success.

Training is a proven way of enabling people who are unemployed, especially those who are more disadvantaged, to compete for the jobs that are available.

This Spotlight showcases the type of programmes offered for the unemployed and provides information about the range of support that is now available.

Spotlight

Welcome to Spotlight, the first of a new series of supplements to the BIS FE and skills e-newsletter. Each Spotlight will focus on a policy or theme of interest to the FE sector and those which support it. We hope to publish three or four Spotlights every year. We welcome feedback (fe.reform@bis.gsi.gov.uk) on both supplement and newsletter.

What makes a great programme?

From August 2011, colleges and training providers were asked to work closely with their local Jobcentre, employers and other agencies to put together training for the unemployed which closely reflects local labour market requirements. At the same time DWP introduced new skills conditionality regulations meaning that some JSA claimants are now required to train if they are to continue to receive benefits.

One year on, there has been considerable work done in many areas to build new partnerships and develop new training programmes. There is still much to do but we are starting to build up a good picture of what works well.

The Ofsted report Skills for employment, from July 2012, gave a good insight in what makes a great programme:

- close working relationships with Jobcentre Plus to increase the amount of people referred, especially to short vocational courses
- the ability to respond quickly to requests for short courses from employers and other partners
- effective use of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to develop accredited training especially at level 2, often in subject areas new to students and linked to an employer's specific needs
- purposeful work experience that develops skills in a real work environment and gives participants an opportunity to show employers their skills and potential
- collaboration with employers to design training in job search skills focusing on CV writing, interview skills and using websites to identify relevant job vacancies
- community-based outreach work to increase access to provision for those in greatest need, such as developing links with housing associations, probation trusts and other specialist agencies, creating high street drop-in venues and providing transport for learners in rural or other isolated areas.

What programmes are available?

Providers are expected to tailor their provision to meet individual and employer needs in their areas. Many providers are making increasing use of the flexibility to offer individual QCF units to develop short programmes focussed on getting learners into work. The most common programmes are short courses which combine employability skills with an introduction to a particular vocational area or with basic skills provision for those claimants whose literacy, numeracy or English language skills are very low.

Skills offer for the unemployed

What is it?

Full funding is provided to train people on JSA and in the ESA Work Related Activity Group - ESA (WRAG) - including ex-offenders, where it will help them find and keep a job. This might be short courses leading to units or credits on the QCF, or full qualifications, or basic skills. Freedoms and flexibilities means that providers can make their own judgement about the kind of provision that will best serve people in their local community.

Is it just for people on JSA or ESA(WRAG)?

Providers have the discretion to help people on other benefits access some training if that helps them prepare for work. Basic literacy and numeracy training is fully funded, as are foundation learning, first full level 2 or 3 qualifications for people aged over 19, but under 24, regardless of benefit status.

What about English, maths and ESOL?

Employers often highlight low levels of literacy and numeracy as being a particular concern and many Jobcentres will refer people whom they believe to have problems for further assessment and training. Jobcentres are often looking for shorter programmes, up to 20 weeks, that enable participants to seek work while training. Learners often have quite diverse needs but some providers have successfully developed provision with a focus on employability for these customer groups.

Why get involved?

- Employers will expect people to have reasonable basic skills and they are the foundation for future learning.
- Freedoms and flexibilities and the unit-based offer means lots of options to meet employer and individual needs.
- Partnership working has its challenges and can take time to set up, but once relationships and systems are in place it can provide a good source of potential learners.
- Job outcome payments are being tested this year where learners do not complete their qualification but leave to get a job.
- There is help available on how best to engage with these learners (see pages 6 & 7)

Sector-based work academies

What are sector-based work academies?

We know that many providers are already good at working with those who need short interventions to help them fill live job vacancies. And we know that this works – Ofsted tells us that, “the most successful provision in getting people into jobs involved bespoke programmes set up in collaboration with Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, Work Programme providers or employers”.

The sector based work academy model combines pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview with an employer and is designed to help employers fill live vacancies. The employer requirement is commonly brokered by the Jobcentre which will then work with a college or training provider to put together the training element of the package. But providers do also put together a sector-based work academy for an employer they already have a relationship with, and then offer it to their local Jobcentre.

Sector-based work academies:

- run full-time (30 hours) for up to six weeks but can be as short as two
- provide training that lead to qualifications or units that prepare learners for the type of work on offer
- can be used as a stepping stone to an Apprenticeship.

Does vocational training for the unemployed have to be a sector-based work academy?

No. Providers are free to develop courses that meet local needs. But sector-based work academies are popular with employers and learners because they are short and tailored. So they offer a useful template for programmes for the unemployed even where there are no immediate job vacancies and an employer cannot offer a guaranteed interview.

Why get involved?

- Popular with learners because they provide a real opportunity to get a job and an incentive to stay the course.
- Popular with employers because they provide a group of pre-selected interviewees who have some understanding of what is required to work in their sector.
- Current providers are beginning to register good success rates.

Don't just take our word for it...

Wirral Metropolitan College and Jobcentre Plus are working closely together to meet the needs of the community and employers. An example is the development and delivery of a sector-based work academy in the hospitality sector.

A number of academies have been delivered and feedback from employers (including a cinema, a casino and a restaurant) has been excellent.

The model developed to meet the needs of these three employers consists of a two-week period of blended pre-employment training and work experience placement. During this, participants complete training modules including customer service, conflict management, company overview, self-assessment, team working, application process, interview techniques and mock interviews (supported by JCP).

An innovative element of the model is the 'Dragons' Den' session. Participants work in teams to think of an idea for the business, research, cost and market the idea, produce a PowerPoint and 'pitch' their idea to the 'dragons', who usually include the employer, a JCP member of staff and Wirral Metropolitan College Employability Skills Manager.

The academy gives the participants the opportunity to gain the following QCF units:

- NCFE Level 1 Award in Enterprise Skills
- BTEC Level 1 Award in Work skills
- CIEH Level 2 Food Safety.

The three academies delivered so far had 98 participants and the roles recruited for include: receptionist, restaurant host, trainee dealer, cinema usher and customer service staff.

To date these academies have resulted in 76 people getting jobs - a 77.6 per cent success rate.

The Work Programme

What's it all about?

The Work Programme began in June 2011 and provides support for people who need more help to find a job. Participants get support to overcome barriers that prevent them from finding and staying in work.

It is delivered by providers who are given flexibility to decide how best to support people and offers support based on individual need rather than on the type of benefits claimed.

Most unemployed people join the Work Programme after 12 months on benefits, but 18-24 year-olds get access after nine months of claiming, with even earlier entry (from three months) for more vulnerable groups like offenders or care leavers.

How does it work?

The Work Programme supports a wide range of people including those who are at risk of long-term unemployment and others who are disabled or have a health condition, and who may have been out of work for several years. They can have a very wide range of needs but these often include poor skills, particularly in English and maths. Work programme providers are sometimes interested in training which is related to labour market opportunities, especially Apprenticeships.

How does a training provider work with a Work Programme provider?

The Work Programme is delivered by a number of prime contractors (contracted to DWP) who each have a range of sub-contractors working for them to deliver specific aspects of their offer. Colleges and training providers are free to negotiate with prime or sub-contractors to meet the needs of Work Programme customers.

Why get involved?

- The Work Programme can provide an alternative source of learners.
- Requirements for providers have been minimised as far as possible, allowing you to innovate and focus resources where it will do most good.

Where does the National Careers Service fit in?

Unemployed people are a priority for face-to-face support from the National Careers Service and an interview with an advisor is an important part of the help offered by Jobcentres. In many places, careers advisors are co-located in the Jobcentre and they commonly offer help with preparing CVs and understanding job entry requirements.

National Careers Service providers can also recommend that people undertake training. It is therefore important for colleges and training providers to work closely with them to ensure that they are up to speed with what is available in the local area. This enables them to inform both learners and Jobcentre advisors.

Working with the unemployed – useful information

There are many resources available online to help develop your programmes for the unemployed. Both LSIS and NIACE publish useful resource material on their websites: see [LSIS Excellence Gateway](#) and [The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education \(NIACE\)](#)

There are also a number of specific guides which have been commissioned to support providers offering programmes for the unemployed:

A general guide covering all aspects of the programme

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) with the support of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) have produced a Guide to Delivering Adult Skills Provision to the Unemployed, designed for all providers active in the employment, learning and skills markets.

Sections include:

- the range of provision and other support available for unemployed people
- guidance and tips on building the learner package to meet the needs of unemployed learners including local labour market issues
- guidance and tips on working with DWP Advisors and Work Programme providers
- information on the benefits as well as guidance on working with DWP customers and the types of barriers that they face.

[The guide is available on the AELP website.](#)

Specific guidance on engaging with micro-businesses to deliver skills training

Published by NIACE, this guide will help you engage with employers with job vacancies and introduce new elements for developing your successful skills provision for unemployed adults.

Topics include:

- understanding the nature and circumstances of micro-businesses
- engagement of micro-businesses
- the delivery of pre-employment training for micro-businesses
- how to make the engagement of micro-businesses cost effective.

[Download a free copy.](#)

Supporting learners with challenging behaviour

Would you like information on how to manage challenging behaviour? NIACE has produced a free guidance paper on how to support and manage this group of adult learners.

The guide provides information on:

- the characteristics of the challenge
- approaches to lower the risk of challenging behaviour
- motivational techniques for delivery.

[Download a free copy.](#)

Further information:

- find out about the Skills Funding Agency [here](#)
- find out about the Work Programme [here](#)
- find out about BIS policy on FE and skills [here](#)
- find your local Job centre [here](#)
- find out about DWP programmes [here](#)
- find out about Sector Based Work Academies [here](#)

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is also available on our website at www.bis.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000

If you require this publication in an alternative format, email enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk, or call 020 7215 5000.

URN 12/1136