

Recruiting Talent in Bassetlaw – Thursday 16 September 2021

Summary of key points of discussion from the event to inform next steps to support inclusive employment activities in Bassetlaw

- There is a large amount of untapped talent within the Bassetlaw labour market – people with long-term health conditions (physical and mental health) represent the largest group along with carers, care leavers, lone parents, those with a disability, learning disability, ex-prisoners and former armed forces personnel.
- Changing nature of jobs – employees want different things in relation to work patterns, terms and conditions, health and safety and environmental considerations.
- The importance of values within an organisation that encourage and support a diverse workforce.
- The need for a greater degree of flexibility in relation to employment opportunities to support individuals that can work but need reasonable adjustments e.g. a shorter shifts; adapting a production line so people can sit instead of stand to carry out their work duties and recruitment processes used etc. Bridging the gap between what people are looking for/able to do and what employment opportunities are available.
- Everybody counts and should have the opportunity to secure sustainable employment.
- Linking individuals on employability programmes with employer vacancies – talent matching service.
- Candidates are falling at the first hurdle with application processes – online, detailed application forms, the wait between completing the application to interview, attending a conventional interview. Suggested changes - the opportunity to visit employer premises; job trials so can see what is involved from both sides and then straight to interview.
- Individuals gaining a greater awareness of employment opportunities in the district. It is understanding what goes on behind the walls of employer buildings – particularly in businesses located in large industrial premises.
- Support for the existing workforce – mental health particularly after the pandemic lockdown period and changes to work practices; aging workforce and people working longer looking at emerging needs that require reasonable adjustments in the workplace; change in circumstances for those that are carers to provide flexible working hours. Part-time opportunities have reduced during the pandemic this has particularly impacted women – look at job share opportunities.

Young Persons Worksop – key points from partner presentations

- Young people (16-25) are the hardest hit during the pandemic, proportionally more likely to be made redundant or put on furlough than colleagues 25+.
- Since the recovery they are also under-represented in those business sectors showing growth and reemploying / taking off furlough.
- BAME – are further impacted as there is a recorded decline in the number of hours worked by black young people compared to white colleagues.
- Kickstart still open to employers to get on board during October. Employers once aware are very engaged in the programme. Many who initially considered one placement ultimately took on several placements.
- Prince's Trust has a range of support programmes and actively engaging with the employability agenda / DWP etc.

- 25% of young people believe their employment prospects will be impacted further over the next 5 years – morale / aspiration / mental wellbeing impacted.
- 50% don't feel the existing recruitment practices work for them. There is long delays from applying for roles to hearing back. Many not receiving a response at all (disengaging further).
- 7 out of 10 said that they don't receive any meaningful feedback from unsuccessful applications so get no opportunity to work on development of gaps / weaknesses.
- Only 1% of employers have HR policies and providing detailed / meaningful feedback to all applicants.
- 3 out of 4 employers don't promote entry level jobs on their websites or social media – focus only on 'perceived' key professional / technical roles which are typically out of reach for young people

Young People Group discussion: -

- "Time seals deals" A quote provided by one of the delegates which identified young people are not standing still and applying for numerous roles. If employers are slow to respond the applicant will have moved on to other opportunities.
- Employers need to change practice and not wait to produce candidate shortlists after vacancy closing dates.
- Respond / acknowledge application immediately – keep in touch regularly and advice on process and timelines.
- Employers should consider interviewing immediately if possible. If not then perhaps introduce stages in between via email / social media / telephone – this may help with vetting but also keep in touch with candidates on processes and timelines.
- Once interviewed decisions need to be made same / next day.
- Utilise social media and consider recruitment activities that don't rely on 2D application forms and CV.
- Consider dedicated young people recruitment open days to attract in applicants and explaining / showing exactly what the job is and what's entailed rather than sugar cost the business.
- Large number of graduates falling through the gaps and not supported by agencies / put off from kick-start. Suggestion Universities are not supporting grad recruitment during pandemic.

Long-term health conditions workshop

- Employers are still perceived to be inflexible to employees working patterns regardless of long term health conditions.
- Continuing dialogue needs to happen to educate employers of hidden disabilities that people have and the barriers that people have to accessing work opportunities.
- Simple adjustments in the workplace would allow people with disabilities to actively contribute.
- Looking at different ways to recruit to wider audiences and working with partner organisations to offer work experience, trails instead of traditional methods.

Long-term health conditions workshop discussion

- Discussion about Access to Work and how this can work for employers. Further information needs to be made available by the DWP.

- People with long term conditions such as health problems need to have flexible shift patterns.
- There is a need for more focussed work with people with autism. More schemes like iWork that actually help people to do the job role.
- Application forms can be off putting to people with long term conditions especially those with neurodiversity conditions.

Next Steps

1. Work with DWP and employability programme partners to understand the needs of untapped talent e.g. what adaptations are required, the skill set and personal qualities they can bring to the organisation, their employment interests and what is presenting a barrier to applying for positions of interest.
2. Details from employers on vacancies available and where adaptations in the workplace can be provided – then matching with individual skills set and how this can support the needs of the business and the individual. Talent matching service. It is how we best manage this – a website was mentioned by one partner.
3. Review our recruitment processes and the barriers they present to candidates – links to number one in next steps, understanding the barriers of individuals and what they are looking for – collective lessons and perhaps pilot new approaches.
4. Effectively using the skills support infrastructure network in the area. We need to cut out several partner providers contacting employers – a unified approach and channel through one point of contact/programme to help funnel this making it easier for businesses to engage. Utilising existing networks – North Notts Skills & Employment Partnership/Employability Group and North Notts Careers Hub Steering Group.
5. Good Work Charter mentioned – the possibility of shared values to our approach to inclusive employment for employers in the district with a support network that sits beneath through existing employability programme activities to support the implementation.
6. The importance of good communication and collaboration to work in partnership on this agenda – the agreed actions/work areas to feature in the North Notts Employment and Skills delivery plan.
7. Individuals being able to visit employer premises to understand more about vacancies available – open days.
8. Employer breakfast meeting to focus on provision available for each customer group e.g. young people; mental health conditions; physical health conditions To help develop next steps.