

Housing Plus

Employment Advice

What we did

In readiness for our Housing Plus Project we recruited a dedicated Employment Advisor in order to provide employment advice at the Gateway, working alongside our Housing Options team. The Employment Advisor will, during the life of the project, embed employment advice within the Housing Options interview.

How we did it

We drafted the job description with assistance from our Job Centre Plus representative.

All materials needed to deliver the Employment Advice service were developed by the Employment Advisor, upon appointment.

The Employment Advisor has since become project manager, we henceforth decided to recruit a further Employment Advisor for six months from May 2010.

Who was involved?

The interview panel was made up of the Housing Operations Manager, Housing Plus Project Manager and a representative from Job Centre Plus.

The Gateway was involved to identify the necessary space to accommodate the Employment Advice service at the Ashford Gateway.

Resources

The Employment Advisor created interview sheets, an employment manual and managed a database of customers and has since gone on to help develop the content of our new self-help kiosks.

We have access to a mobile Gateway, which can be deployed in rural areas, for outreach and promotional activities. Our Employment Advisor is responsible for the co-ordination of these events, which involves wider project partners.

The Gateway provides a dedicated space for the delivery of the new advice service at Gateways in Ashford and Tenterden.



Time taken

From scoping out the job description and appointment to filling the post took approximately three months.

Lessons learned

The Employment Advisor has assisted greatly in mapping existing organisations and provision within this sector and has helped to identify new partners who have gone on to be contributors to the project. The time allocated for the advisor to meet partners and support organisations before the introduction of employment advice helped raise awareness and gain support for the project early on.

The Employment Advisor also assists with the Employment and Training Group in Ashford, which has helped keep knowledge on local provision up to date.

Cost

£24,000 per year plus on costs fully funded through Trailblazer.

Additional Information

Following an approach from Sure Start in Ashford who were seeking to explore how best to provide employment and benefit advice, a business case was made to create a new post within Sure Start to provide employment advice.

We intend to embed employment advice within the Housing Option Officer's interview structure as part of our exit strategy.

The Employment Advisor will assist in setting up our Housing Employment Link Programme (HELP) in terms of mapping services.

For more information email: Housingplus@ashford.gov.uk