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Borders Finding Out Project Employment Workshop



Most of the pictures in this report came from Change Picture Bank

Borders Finding Out Project

Employment workshop

Part 1: Who we are and what we did

The Borders Finding Out project brings together people who have learning disabilities, families, people who work in services for people with learning disabilities and people who are interested in everyone having the chance to do what they want.



Over the past year we have visited places to find out about opportunities for people with learning disabilities. We think that people with learning disabilities should be able to work if they want – people should look at our **learning abilities** and let us show what we can do.

We heard that there was a good employment project in Fife. A lot of people from Borders wanted to visit the Fife Employability Team. So we asked them to come to Borders and meet us instead.

We held a workshop in Hawick on 16th November.

People came from all over Borders.



As well as the people from Fife, we had information about employment projects in Borders.



This is the report about the workshop.

We are sending this report to people who came to the day and to other people in Borders.



What you can do

After you have read the report, we want you to think about what you can do.



If you are someone with a learning disability:

- Do you want to get a job? Ask your support worker to help you, or contact Ways to Work.

If you are someone who employs people:

- Do you have jobs that would be good for people who don't have much experience yet but want to work?

If you provide support service for people with learning disabilities, or if you are a friend or relative:

- Are you making sure that the people you support know that getting a job might be an option for them?

At the end of this report we have listed organisations which can give information about getting into work or employing people who don't have much experience. You can get in touch with them.



Thank you

These are the people we want to thank.

- Callum, Angela and Sam, who came from the Fife Employability Team and told us about what they do.
- Bruce Brodie of the Ways to Work project, who organised the conference.
- The people at the Katherine Elliot Centre in Hawick, who let us use the Centre and who looked after everyone on the day.
- Everyone who came to the conference.
- The members of the Finding Out Project who wrote the report.

The pictures in this report came from Change Picture Bank and from the drawings Helen Wilson did for the Outside the Box moving on resource pack.



Part 2: What we heard at the workshop

What are the benefits of people working?

This is what the Fife Team and people in Borders have found.

A job gives people

- a place in the community
- money and independence
- confidence and self-esteem
- social contacts
- new skills.



"I work one day a week in a shop. I've met lots of people there. Now more people say hello when they meet me in the town."

"I like working in the garden and I'm good at it. I want a job doing gardening."

"If you have more money – even a wee bit more - you decide what to spend it on."

(participants at the workshop)

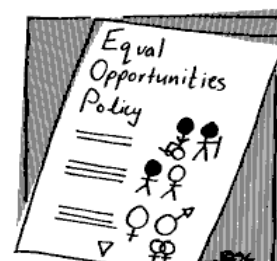
Fife Employability Team

Callum McGregor is the team leader. He told us about what the team does. Sam and Angela told us about some of the people they work with.



The Fife Employability Team helps to deliver Fife's Community Plan. The Plan has 3 aims.

- Delivering an inclusive Fife. The Council has the Employability Team because they recognise that people with disabilities are not included.
- Addressing the issues of inequality and discrimination through specific targeted action. The Employability Team assists people who want a job.



- Creating a stronger, more flexible and more diverse economy. If more people work they have more money to spend and they do useful things, so everyone benefits.

The team is part of the Social Work Service of Fife Council. They help anyone who has a disability get employment, not just people with learning disabilities. Over the years they have made changes to what they do, to give people who come to them more choices and find the type of work that is right for them.

In 1999, there were

- 6.5 posts
- 2 sheltered workshops.

In 2005 there are:

- 13 posts – and the staff have to know more about the whole range of options that people have, to make sure people have more choices.
- The sheltered workshops are doing a wider range of activities. They bring in about half the cost of running the workshop through selling what they make.
- There are projects to help people develop their skills and confidence before they go on to work.



- There is a project for people who have Asperger's Syndrome who want to work.
- There is a project which works with people in touch with the West Fife Community Support Service (one of the old Resource Centres, which now has community bases). They provide support to 93 people and 30 have now got a job.
- There are other projects based in particular places or supporting people with particular needs.

In practice, every person gets the support they need, and the staff work together as a big team. But they have found that when they have a 'project' that is focussed on the needs of a particular group of people, this encourages those people to think that they can work.

The Team has looked at its own posts and changed the hours people can work so that more people with disabilities can do these jobs.



Everyone who works in the sheltered workshops or at one of the other projects is a Fife Council employee. They all get paid the rate for the job.



Stories about people in Fife

We saw Brian working in the garden at a hotel in Fife. Brian used to go every day to the old Resource Centre. Brian has found that the best arrangement for him is to work for part of the day, on 2 days a week.

"I tidy up the gardens around the hotel. I help the head gardener. I like working outside. It's good exercise! Getting paid is the best thing about having a job."



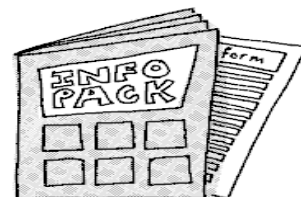
Brian loses some of his benefits – he is effectively working for very little extra money. But he has decided that he is happier working because he enjoys this job.

At the beginning, the Employability Team gave Brian a lot of support. But now he gets support from his boss. The Employability Team keep in touch to make sure they are both OK.

The Say Its Workable Team is people who have learning disabilities. They have helped put together a lot of information for employers, to show what good workers people with learning disabilities will be.

They have also made posters and other information to raise awareness among people with learning disabilities about work and how to get started.

They are now starting work on information for families, as sometimes it is people's mums and dads who are worried about them getting a job.



In Fife they have a big event each year to celebrate their success. It lets people who have got jobs and their employers come together.

This is the third year they have had the Fife Business Diversity Awards.



Well Done Everyone

Questions and discussion

We talked about being a volunteer, rather than getting paid to work.

This is what people said.

"Volunteering can be a good way to try things."



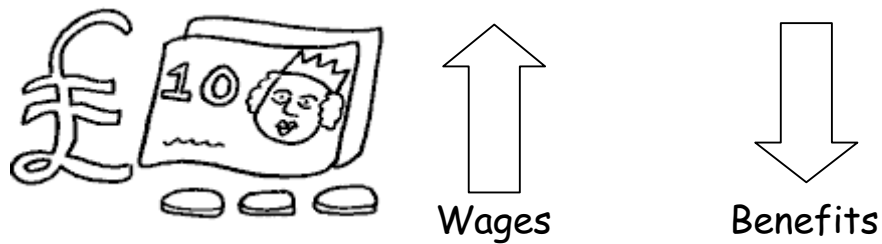
"It's good to be a volunteer if this is what you want to do and everyone there is a volunteer."

"You should get paid for the work you do if other people are getting paid."

"You need staff who will work with people to help them get the confidence to do a paid job."



People asked about what happens when people get paid and the money they get in benefits goes down.



This is what people said.

"It all depends what type of benefits you are on. The employment project will work out what will happen to your benefits. Then you decide what is best for you."

"I worry about getting less money in my benefits."

"I think it is ok as long as you have a bit more money in your pocket."

"Getting more confident and having a job is more important to me than getting the money."

"Some people's mums and dads tell them not to work unless they will get a lot more money."

"I think it is better to work for a short time and get to meet new people than to not have a job."



Someone had been unwell and the doctor said she couldn't work although she wanted to work.



We talked about what happens if your health changes.

"You might still be able to do a different type of job."

"Sometimes working shorter hours will suit you better."

"If you are already in a job, talk to the employer and see if there is a way around what you need."

"You can take a break and then look for a job again."

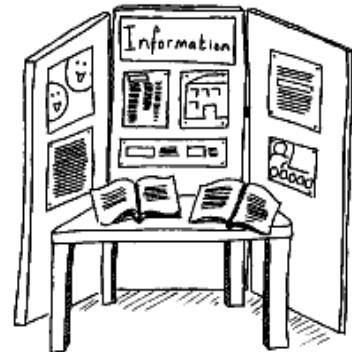
"Most people with disabilities know how to look after themselves. The employment project will explain all that to the employer and help you get the support you need."



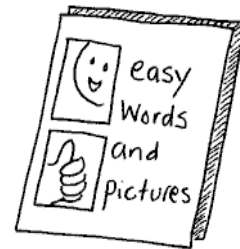
Part 3: What do we want to do next in Borders?

We came up with a list of things that we can do quickly.

- Have a job broker service.
- Have more publicity about Ways to Work.
- Have information about work for people with learning disabilities with picture signs and words, so lots of people can understand it.

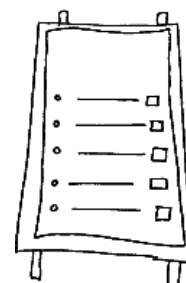


- Have a lot more posters, to raise awareness that people with disabilities want to work.
- Have information for employers like the material they use in Fife.
- Get people with different types of disabilities to talk to each other and see what we can learn about getting into work.
- Get people together to plan for more social firms.



We also had ideas that will take longer to happen – so we need to start planning now.

- Have more social firms in Borders.
- Co-ordinate the services in Borders, so everyone knows what is happening.



- Move employment services from short-term funding to mainstream funding.



- Get more flexible transport, so people can be independent and get to work.



- Scottish Borders Council and the NHS should look at the employment opportunities they have for people with learning disabilities.



- There should be more opportunities for people to go into work when they leave school instead of always going to College first.



- Colleges should have a lot more information about jobs and should help people get ready for work.

- Get the senior people from Scottish Borders Council and other people who make decisions to understand why this matters so much.



- We should have a conference about people with learning disabilities and work. People with learning disabilities will be involved in planning it and running the conference. The conference will celebrate what people with learning disabilities in Borders are achieving.



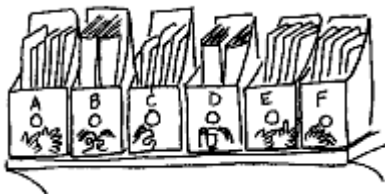
Part 4: People and organisations in Borders who can help

Ways 2 Work
Scottish Borders Council, Council HQ
Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825080

Local Area Co-ordinators:

John Spiteri, Scottish Borders Learning Disability Service,
Lanark Lodge, Bridgend, Duns TD11 3EX
Tel: 01361 882540 or email jspiteri@scotborders.gov.uk

Claire Stephenson, Scottish Borders Learning Disability Service,
Howdenbank, Hawick TD9 7JT
Tel: 01450 374230 or email cstephenson@scotborders.gov.uk



The Borders Finding Out Project

The Borders Finding Out project has a Seeing in Believing grant from Communities Scotland. Other funding and help in kind has come from Borders Voluntary Community Care Forum and Scottish Borders Council.

More information about the project is available from

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Tel: 0141 552 5592

Further copies of this report and the report on the overall Finding Our Project are available from BVCCF or Outside the Box.

The reports are also on the Outside the Box website:
www.otbds.org