

## **Case study: Communities into Training and Employment**

### **Introduction to the provider and provision**

Communities into Training and Employment (CITE) is a small charity, based in the King's Cross area of London, providing IAG and training for unemployed adults and NVQ training to employees across the Capital. CITE has recently been an LSIS Sector Champion supporting the development of the LSIS framework to assess and improve the delivery of programmes for the unemployed.

CITE supports over 1800 unemployed people a year, allaying its training provision with its recruitment service for employers, particularly in the health and social care sectors.

### **Key effectiveness factors:**

- A three sided relationship with Jobcentre Plus and employers in the health and social care sectors
- Offering a recruitment solution to employers and training unemployed people for clusters of vacancies.
- Already incorporating some QCF units and undertaking curriculum development to obtain accreditation to deliver other relevant units.

### **A three sided relationship with Jobcentre Plus and employers in the health and social care sector**

CITE operates a close three sided partnership with JCP and employers. This relationship with both Jobcentre Plus and a pool of regular employer customers enables it to monitor and respond to changing recruitment demand.

The Jobcentre Plus role is critical, not only for referrals but also 'in bringing employers to the table'. Where there are clusters of vacancies, CITE can provide a pre-employment training programme that is customized to each specific vacancy. This enhances the service that the JCP can offer employers, to mutual benefit resulting in good job entry and sustainability rates for JCP customers.

The employer role in this three sided relationship is the key to CITE's success in getting people into jobs. CITE has a relationship with around 15 employers from whom it gets repeat business, usually working with 2-3 at any one time. It promotes this as 'a free recruitment service London-wide' in which it:

- Matches suitable candidates to job specifications.
- Provides customised assessment and screening services to identify when learners are ready to apply for vacancies.
- Trains people to meet job entry requirements, as defined by the employer for a specific vacancy. For example, the bespoke training course could include a specific module on 'facilitating independent living for people with learning disabilities'.

- Offers to widen employers' pools of job applicants by identifying and training suitable candidates they would otherwise not reach.
- Helps to increase retention by identifying local candidates who are keen to stay, to learn and to develop their career by providing in work support and further training where appropriate.
- Uses funding flexibly to cover the costs of these services.

CITE's model can significantly increase an employer's success rates. For example, in a recent recruitment exercise with an NHS Trust, 96% of those learners CITE put forward were selected for interview and 92% of those interviewed were offered jobs. Retention so far (3 months) has been 100%.

### **Provision of labour market relevant skills**

CITE has an in-depth understanding of the sectors it works with and a particularly strong relationship with the NHS. Their core programme is designed to meet the job entry standards defined by the relevant Sector Skills Council (e.g. the 'common induction standards' set by Skills for Care). As the key focus is on identifying and filling particular vacancies or clusters of vacancies, CITE fine-tunes its pre-employment courses in discussion with the employer, for example, by adding half day modules on mental health issues for a particular NHS Trust. To quote a manager from one of the Trusts, 'we now have a model that can be enhanced and adapted on an ongoing basis to suit future clusters of vacancies'.

Many of CITE's pre-employment training modules can provide candidates with a qualification. For instance, candidates participating in CITE's delivery of the 'Six Month's Offer' or 'Routes into Work' programmes undertook a training module that resulted in a level 2 qualification such as food hygiene or health and safety at work. Achievement rate for qualifications last year was 95%.

### **Course format**

CITE's pre-employment training courses are part of a range of services aimed at increasing the employability of people who are not working. Individuals who are suitable for the target vacancy and who stand a good chance of securing a job offer after completing the customised training course are offered a place on the course. Those that are not yet ready are offered preparation training and/or referred to other provision in the community. The pre-employment training varies in length according to the target vacancy, ranging from 1 week to 4 weeks in length. Given that courses are linked to an employer's recruitment process they are, of necessity, short with a rapid turn round. Courses are run throughout the year though with fewer in August and December.

CITE's pre-employment training is directed towards:

- Either a particular vacancy or, preferable cluster of vacancies, with a specific employer.
- Or sector-specific training in areas of high recruitment demand, such as health and social care, retail, etc.

The pre-employment training itself is typically designed to reflect both the needs of the employer (as defined by the entry requirements of the vacancy) and the individual. The latter is based upon CITE's considerable experience of working with unemployed individuals and their understanding of the various factors that contribute to an individual's 'job readiness', combined with an understanding of what learning can be achieved in a short course. Courses typically include a combination of:

- Job specific training such as company information, short accredited courses (e.g. food hygiene) and specific skills training
- Personal development including communication skills, team working and confidence building
- Job search skills training and job search support.

Most of CITE's pre-employment training courses have direct employer input. This can be through a manager describing the recruitment process and what attributes they were looking for in potential staff, a talk from an existing employee about the job role and the realities of the work or sometimes service users discussing their requirements and what they expect from service delivery. As a care sector employer describes it, "the CITE programme helps us get to know the candidates a little more ... and we bring service users with us to see how different candidates respond. When people come for interview we know each other a little, so they are more relaxed and we can get a better feel for what they are like."

An NHS Trust manager has described this approach as follows: 'CITE set up a short course that fed into the recruitment day ... Candidates were given thorough information regarding the nature of the job and what to expect as well as an introduction to the principles of care. As a result, the people we interviewed were all committed to the specific job vacancy and showed an understanding of the requirements of the role. We were able to successfully fill all our healthcare assistant vacancies through the process.'

CITE provides job search support for candidates who aren't successful with the first vacancies they apply for. This is offered through group sessions and one to one support and lasts for at least 8 weeks after the course and can be extended if appropriate.

### **Progression to full level 2 and apprenticeships**

Although the immediate goal is to be successful in applying for a particular vacancy or vacancies, both CITE and its candidates plan for subsequent progression from entry level jobs to higher paid jobs with greater responsibility. This is especially important in London given the high cost of living as 'entry level' jobs are frequently not sustainable without continued benefit support. To quote one CITE candidate now progressing in a job, 'The whole course gave me a lot of insight into health and social care. It helped me enormously as I am now very confident in my current job ... I have completed my NVQ level 2 and Health and Social Care and now I'm looking to do the level 3'.

To this end, CITE has provided in-work NVQ training for employers and plans to extend this in-work offer in the new academic year through apprenticeships and adult apprenticeships. It is currently in active discussion with a number of NHS Trusts about developing apprenticeship programmes.

## **Learner destinations**

CITE typically achieves a 50% job entry rate on standard pre-employment training courses. The rate is considerably higher where the courses are customised to specific vacancies with CITE achieving over 75% job entry rates on a regular basis. The highest job entry rate achieved to date is 92%. 85% of CITE candidates entering work sustain their jobs for more than 13 weeks. It attributes this to its staged programme of support, training tailored to vacancies and sectors and the assessment service which it provides for employers.

## **Future approaches**

CITE believes that, as a sub-contractor to a larger learning provider, its employment support model could be delivered under the Adult Skills Budget and CITE has already received some sub-contract offers both through SFA ESF programmes for the unemployed and the Adult Skills Budget. By October 2011, CITE will have incorporated at least one relevant Level 2 QCF unit into their health and social care, retail and customer care pre-employment training.

CITE is also currently working (as the lead organisation) with three colleges on a development project through LSIS 'flexibility and innovation' funding. The overall aim of this initiative is to assist the FE Sector to increase job entry rates within programmes for unemployed adults and other relevant (including mainstream) provision. This will be done by the development of an effective Job Readiness Diagnostic Methodology and piloting a new 'Job Hub' which provides intensive job brokerage and job search support to individuals who are job ready.

CITE is in discussion with the London 'prime contractors' for the Work Programme, with a view to becoming a specialist sub-contractor delivering their pre-employment training and in-work support. To date one such sub-contract has been formally agreed.

## **For further information, please contact:**

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