

Bridge to Employment Case Study

The Company - Extra Care – Domiciliary Care Providers

Extra Care is one of Northern Ireland's leading domiciliary care providers. They provide a range of services, including help with personal care and practical tasks, throughout the day and night, to support dependent adults to remain living at home with dignity. Extra Care provides 12 000 hours of care per week to service users across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Challenge

Extra Care required a number of Care Workers to fill positions in the Belfast and surrounding area; Ballymena region (including Antrim, Magherafelt, Cookstown and surrounding areas); and Downpatrick region (including Lisburn, Newcastle and surrounding areas).

The Strategy

A meeting was arranged with a Bridge to Employment Project Manager, to discuss the options available to the company which included:

- Assistance with recruitment and training costs;
- Access to a wide recruitment base;
- Testing and interviewing of applicants;
- Customised training programmes focused on your company's needs;
- No financial commitment

After discussions with the Company and a Bridge to Employment Project Manager a customised training programme was developed to meet the needs of the company.

The course was provided under the Department's Bridge to Employment programme which equips unemployed people with the skills to compete for new job opportunities.

The training course was designed to provide the trainee with a sound understanding of the tasks involved as a Care worker and included:

- Training on dementia and other common medical conditions;
- Guidance on how to provide practical support with personal care tasks;
- Recognising signs of abuse and how to report it;
- Record keeping and the Data Protection Act;
- Health and safety and fire protection.

While undertaking Bridge to Employment training an unemployed person:-

At least 80% of people who complete Bridge training courses and attend the interview get jobs

- Retained their benefits while in training;
- Was eligible for child care allowance while in training (if applicable);
- Was reimbursed weekly travel expenses, limited to the cheapest cost of using public transport while in training

Feedback from Company

The programme was so successful that a further Bridge to Employment programme was developed as Extra Care required a number of Care Workers to fill other positions in Enniskillen and Omagh (and surrounding area) and Ballyclare, Carrick and Whitehead.

“Extra Care benefitted from the partnership with the Bridge to Employment team. As a not for profit organisation, we welcomed the assistance with advertising costs, as well as administrative help with short listing, information days and interviews. The programme helped potential employees learn more about our organisation and gave us the opportunity to learn about them in a customised training environment. Throughout the programme, the Bridge to Employment team provided advice and support and helped us to find motivated and enthusiastic employees”.