

# Community Recruitment and Casual Worker 'Pools'

## Bradford Council

Recognising that the health and social care sector is a growth sector and that there are high unemployment rates in Bradford, 18 months ago Bradford Council (BC) and partners successfully put in a bid for £1.1 million worth of funding to build a One Workforce Programme, aimed at creating positive job outcomes within the health and social care sector, and developing a more integrated health and social care workforce.



Projects within this programme run through an end-to-end employment service within BC called SkillsHouse, which works closely with the local Job Centre to identify employment opportunities, and offers a range of pathways for individuals seeking employment.



**“Good partnership buy-in from senior officers has been key to receiving funding for this programme. Bradford’s Health and Social Care Economic Partnership Board includes representatives from local universities, hospital trusts, the care sector and voluntary sector – all of whom understand the demand for and value of recruitment and training within the care sector.”**

Tina Lafferty

Programme Director, Health and Social Care Economic Partnership

### Community Recruitment Project

One project within the One Workforce Programme is the Community Recruitment Project. This project funds three Community Engagement Officers stationed across various colleges in Bradford as well as within BC. Before the pandemic, these officers worked across community groups to provide training opportunities to enhance employability. They currently offer virtual information sessions for jobseekers and work to ensure an inclusive recruitment process.

BC’s initial target was to work with 1,200 jobseekers and to get 1,000 people into employment. BC has surpassed this engagement target, with over 1,400 individuals engaged in the project to date. Of this, 108 individuals have successfully moved into employment in the health and social care sector, 142 people have undertaken skills and vocational training, 51 have taken up volunteering roles, and the remaining individuals continue to receive ongoing support and guidance. In order to increase the number of positive job outcomes further, BC is working to establish further support programmes for job seekers to ensure that they have the support they need to be ready for employment.

Following the success of this campaign, BC has invested further funding to expand this project into an all-sector, non-time-limited model. In 2021, this investment will see the service shift in focus to develop a whole-system approach to entry-level recruitment, in which local vacancies will be pooled and advertised solely through SkillsHouse, to ensure a range of employment opportunities for those receiving support.

## Casual Worker 'Pool'

Another project sitting within the One Workforce Programme and running through SkillsHouse is BC's Casual Worker Pool. This exists to provide casual staff to the care sector at an affordable rate subsidised by BC, eliminating finances as a barrier to temporary recruitment for care providers and creating job opportunities and providing a steppingstone for those interested in working in care.

Once DBS and other checks have been processed, individuals recruited through the Casual Worker Pool undertake a three-day online training course to deliver the fundamentals of the Care Certificate, followed by a five-day practical work experience within a council 'in-house' care service, all coordinated through SkillsHouse. Support workers are then drafted from the Pool in line with demand from care providers.

The use of the Casual Worker Pool has varied throughout the pandemic. At its peak, SkillsHouse had 24 workers available for temporary or permanent care support positions across the independent sector. BC recently reinstated advertising for this project based on increased demand. BC has now aligned the management of the Casual Worker Pool with the local authority adult care services, to ensure that after initial recruitment and training by SkillsHouse, these services can provide round-the-clock management of the Pool.

As this project grows in success, BC is working with a local college to build clear progression routes for those who are recruited through this pathway. This would include, for example, partaking in sector-based work academy training, or work towards the Care Certificate, with an aim to make it clearer for people to see how progress in qualifications and experience can lead to increases in pay.

Overall, BC's vision for the One Workforce Programme is very ambitious, and following the success of various projects within this programme, BC looks to align the One Workforce Programme with Bradford's Economic Strategy in the New Year.



### Top tips for temporary and permanent recruitment projects for the care sector



**Foster initial partnership buy-in from senior officers from across the health and social care sector to secure funding**



**Draw on relationships with local care providers to support training opportunities and work experience for new recruits**



**Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to deal with varying demand for services**



**Build in on-going review and refine processes to ensure that programmes of work continue to meet the needs of the sector**

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