

Case study: working with Jobcentre Plus

Kennedy Scott

We invite Jobcentre Plus advisers to our office to sit in on one-to-one sessions (with the customer's permission) and attend or take part in group sessions. This enables us to show we can work with the customers they refer to us.

We offer vacancies for our pre-employment courses via Jobcentre Plus. We run regular sessions for a large local food producer, a retail group and an event recruitment company. This helps Jobcentre Plus get customers moving into employment and to meet their own targets. Some of the posts we offer are especially suitable for 50+ customers and this is made clear when the vacancies are offered.

Jobcentre Plus sends us the Local Employment Partnerships vacancy lists every week and the daily vacancy sheets from the local Jobcentre Plus office. This two way co-operation has really helped to cement our relationship.

We work with mandated customers in several offices and the key here is knowing exactly what Jobcentre Plus wants us to deliver. We also need to understand the challenges these customers face when they are sent on a course they do not want to attend. 50+ customers often feel that they have been sent on courses of no relevance to them, that the adviser is too young to understand their issues, and that no-one wants them as they are too old. The way we sell the course to them at induction is key to their active participation in the event.

We keep all our staff up to date with the changes in the programmes and services Jobcentre Plus offers their customers and providers as these can change at short notice.

We do this by:

- checking the Jobcentre Plus website
- reading *In Touch* (the Jobcentre Plus electronic customer magazine) on their website
- attending local provider meetings.

There are times when we manage to do this over a cup of coffee away from the office, which is even better.