Removing barriers to work

**About**

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough was ranked the sixth most deprived district in England. The Department for Work and Pensions commissioned Job Centre Plus to develop the Action for Jobs Team in 2000.

This has made a significant impact in removing barriers to work. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council’s (KMBC) involvement in reducing the unemployment rate by targeting and supporting those who face significant barriers to gaining and sustaining employment was recently recognised when the authority was awarded Beacon Status for ‘Removing Barriers to Work’.

**Objective**

Knowsley Works help unemployed people to find employment by organising and running programmes for clients. These programmes range from dealing with alcohol abuse to learning IT skills.

Impact has been working in partnership with KMBC since 2000 to provide engaging, stimulating and consequential learning programmes, that challenge attitudes and behaviours and increase the desire and motivation of individuals to be in work.

**Solution**

Impact’s intervention focuses on developing the personal and team working skills required to gain and retain employment. Participants come from a range of backgrounds and often have been unemployed for a number of years. They range from ages 17 to 50 and are often lacking in confidence, self-esteem and basic behavioural awareness.

Using challenging experiences in an environment that harnesses the power of self-reliance and consequence, the participants are inspired to get to where they want to be. The programme involves a physical journey, outdoor activities and group project work and each participant is given as much freedom as possible to make their own decisions. Through facilitated discussions and feedback conversations, they learn real lessons and can see how to apply them to their lives and work.

**Results**

Through a memorable, enjoyable and stretching shared experience the participants develop personal skills and attitudes that help them to win and keep employment.

“This part of the programme is always done in the early stages; the difference it has made to clients has been overwhelming. Once clients have returned they are more motivated, their managers notice a big difference from carrying out their daily activities to taking on new responsibilities, and they speak highly of the staff that supported them.”

Patrick McCarten
Programmes Manager, Employment & Social Inclusion Department