

VALUING PEOPLE IN LEICESTER

Nothing About Us Without Us

Issue 31

Welcome to Adult and Housing

Two people who recently came onto the Assisted Employment Scheme are keen to tell us how they secured their new jobs. It has been a busy time for Shamima Essat (Valuing People Support Assistant) and David Brown (Person Centred Planning Assistant) since they came into post during the summer. We caught up with them between meetings.

Shamima and David are part of the first group of people with learning disabilities employed by Leicester City Council under the Assisted Employment Scheme. A Valuing People Support Assistant helps the Valuing People Coordinator to plan and prepare for meetings.

A Person Centred Planning Assistant helps to promote Person Centred Planning and Person centred approaches for people with learning disabilities in Leicester.

David and Shamima have very different employment backgrounds. David has been attending the Leicester City Partnership Board for some time in an unpaid capacity! He has also worked alongside Jill Eddlestone at CLEAR as a consultant, contributing to Communication training and advice services.

Shamima has never had the opportunity to do paid work. When she left college with very few qualifications (her own words), she found herself involved in some volunteering work “which was great” but did not stretch her.

David and Shamima heard about the job vacancies and were encouraged by their friends and colleagues to request the forms and fill in the application forms. Staff at Employment Plus Services encouraged David to apply. David had experience, which he was able to draw on when filling in the forms. Shamima was alerted to this opportunity through her colleagues at ANSAAR. They encouraged her to complete the application form and a CV. Shamima says that ANSAAR have also helped other people. Shamima appreciates the positive way in which they assisted her by talking through which post she would be best suited to. David and Shamima say that it was helpful to have clearly written job specifications and job descriptions when choosing which jobs they wanted to apply for.

After a wait for about a month, both David and Shamima were invited to attend interviews at Hastings Road Support Services. The letter of invite was clearly written. Shamima spoke about being really nervous prior to her interview, but her mum's advice helped to calm those jitters. David also admitted to being nervous, despite his experience.

Both were interviewed separately by a panel of three people and from all accounts, they coped admirably with the pressure. Shamima recalls that she was asked to talk about Equal Opportunities and her expectations of the job. She also had a chance to tell the Panel about her hobbies and was given a practical task to carry out. She believes that she was treated fairly and made to feel as comfortable as possible, given that it was an interview situation. David was in agreement. There was a massive feeling of relief afterwards.

Then came the big wait.....Both David and Shamima were rung up after a week and given the good news by Sam Holliday, Senior Practitioner for Employment Services. Needless to say, they were "over the moon".

Then came an even longer wait.....Both had to delay starting their new jobs until their health checks, references and CRB's (Criminal Records checks) have come through. They told us that it was a very frustrating time as they were desperate to get started in their new posts.

Both David and Shamima are keen to say how helpful and welcoming their work colleagues have been.

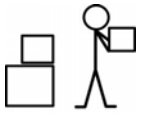
David says that they have been given support to settle into their new posts. Both have to use computers as part of their work and they have been given encouragement to do this. Sending emails and replying are now part of David's daily routine. Shamima says that people have been very supportive. She feels that the Introductory Meeting that she attended at the Town Hall was a great idea. She learnt important things about Human Resources, Health and Safety and the Unions.

Both told us that it is a challenge meeting new people and preparing, attending and speaking up in important meetings.

David was "nervous about doing new things". He has enjoyed the experiences that his new role brings and he is always busy. Shamima says that she is "more grown up and mature" now and that the job enables her to "enjoy my life".

Finally, both individuals acknowledge that they have changed. They have grown in confidence and both feel that they made the right decision when applying for the posts.

Thank you David and Shamima for sharing this experience with us.



Update on Employment Assisted Posts in the Adults and Housing Learning Disability Service



The Employment Team reported to the April Learning Disability Partnership Board that they advertised, interviewed and appointed people with Learning Disabilities to work in the Adults and Housing Department, Learning Disabilities.

What has happened so far:

8 posts were advertised:



- Outing Assistant
- Dining Room Assistant
- Laundry Assistant
- Clerical Support Assistant
- Valuing People Assistant
- Person Centred Planning Assistant
- Travel Buddy
- Service User Quality Coach

43 people applied for the jobs, not everyone got one though. We have offered jobs to 17 people, they have accepted and they will be working different hours, from 4 hours up to 16 hours a week.

In line with Leicester City Council Equal Opportunities policies, Human Resources have worked with us to check the references. People also had to have medical checks and Police Checks (CRB's).

One person who has started at Hastings Road as a Clerical Support Assistant says everyone is being very helpful, kind and helping her to learn her new job. She has said she is really enjoying it.

Thank you to Remploy who helped people to complete their application form. They also helped people at interview to give them confidence and not to be too nervous, and to complete their Police Check form and their Medical Check form. People who wanted to make sure their benefits are okay were helped by Remploy. People can also get help from the Benefit Service within Adults and Housing Department.

Remploy and Values (the voluntary agency) are now supporting people in their employment.

Human Resources sent out letters to the applicants which are easy to read and easy to understand.

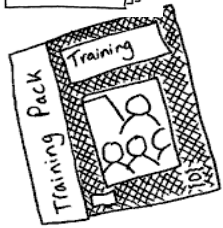




Thank you to Shipa Arya and Lynn Roffee in Human Resources. They are giving the people who will be working in these posts 'Annualised Contracts' – this means they can work their hours over 52 weeks - this is one year, this will give the people working and the service more flexibility, also it means their benefits will not be affected.



Human Resources have looked at the information new workers need, like 'Code of Conduct' – the rules we have to follow. They are also looking at how they can make the contract easy to read, and are working on a new draft application form.



A half a day training session for all the new people was arranged and took place on



Representatives from Staff Development Unit, Health and Safety and Employee's Disability Group attended.



Lynn Roffee from Human Resources helped people to understand why we have policies and procedures and what it means to be a council employee.

Representatives from the Unions informed people how they work with the council, how you can join, what it means and how much it will cost.



The people with Learning Disabilities who did not get a job.

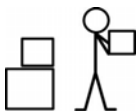


Remploy and an organisation called Choice will ask these people if they would like more support to get another job and they will help them.



The Learning Disability team are offering work experience to the people who want it to enable them to gain experience and it will help them to get a job in the future.

Trish Branson and the employment team would like to thank everyone who has been involved and has made this happen.



Thank you

