

European Social Fund Employability and Poverty Programmes Case studies

Case Study 1 - Participant

Abby

Name of Employability provider

Strathmore Centre for Youth Development (SCYD)

Background

Abby had been doing some volunteering for SCYD Events, which is our voluntary events service run by young people, for a while. But she was doing it more as a hobby than as a path to something else. She didn't want to do anything in particular, she didn't have any work experience and she wasn't sure where she was going.

Abby was lacking direction after leaving a Vehicular Mechanics Course she had started. She was not wishing to return to college nor interested in finding a job.

How it happened / the process

Abby had no plans, but hoped to earn some money in the future, and go travelling. While she was still volunteering with SCYD Events, the Prince's Trust came in and asked if we had anyone we wanted to put forward. I asked her, and she wasn't too sure at first, but she went for it.

We felt it was important to encourage and support her move into the Prince's Trust, so she could get experience of working with other young people. She knew someone there in Kenmore where they run one of the centres but she wouldn't have gone for any of these things on her own.

In the end she was the only one from our group who did decide to go, which was a brave step. And she realised just how motivated she is.

What were the challenges and how did we help?

Abby's main challenge was that she didn't have any plans, objectives or destination in mind. By being patient and talking to her about the Prince's Trust and its benefits we were able to convince her that this could be a great thing for her to do.

Outcome and next steps

We have supported Abby as she goes through the Prince's Trust programme, and she has now seen where she fits in with other people. From this experience she has come to the conclusion that she actually does love what she's doing, and it's now for her to make it happen. She's been comparing herself to other volunteers in the programme, and has seen just what she has to give and how, in fact, she is motivated.

She met with us the other day and she said, "I know exactly what I want to do. I want to do conference meetings, and team-building, working with professionals." And suddenly she knows who she is now. We are attending her graduation from the Prince's Trust and have already identified suitable placements and contacts with which to follow on. She still plans to volunteer on SCYD Events even when she eventually starts working full time ... she just loves it!

Case study 2 - Participant

John

Name of Employability Provider

PUSH - iWork Project

Background

This participant came to PUSH about 6 months ago. He had had a good career before but due to personal circumstances he had a period of unemployment for over two years, during which time he decided he could not return to his previous chosen career. So he decided that a career in administration was for him, having developed skills in IT. He was therefore interested in getting back into work, but needed support. At PUSH we have a good relationship with the Job Centre and they asked us if we had a good volunteering opportunity for him. He came with two Job Centre support workers to the initial meeting as he was feeling anxious.

How it happened / the process

Stephen Murray, Training Manager at PUSH, says, "I listened to him and found out about his interests. He had some IT experience so I suggested that he tried a couple of hours listing things on our Gumtree site. After about two or three months, he was engaging more with us, and he was more confident and comfortable with what he was doing, so I said, do you want to add another hour on, and work a normal 3-hour shift? That was fine, and from Gumtree I introduced him to taking on eBay, which is a bit more complex."

We asked him if he would like to do more hours, and we got funding through the ESF Wage Subsidy Project for six months, so now he's with us for 25 hours a week.

What were the challenges and how did we help?

Catriona Palombo, CEO of PUSH, says, "The challenge in the initial stages for this participant was to get back to working with people again, being in a work situation and coping with that. We helped him to develop coping strategies and, being an organisation that understands the various barriers faced by people returning to work we will pick up on times when there might be additional stresses and we help our participants to deal with them."

Outcome and next steps

He has flourished at online sales and he is effectively running the eBay department now, with Stephen overseeing it with him. He's also now training other people to do certain steps of eBay too and supervising them. Within the six months since he started, there has been a huge personal and professional development for him. Stephen says, "He's very competent at the job, I've have every confidence in his ability to carry out the job independently. He's great with the other trainees too and is very patient when instructing."

When asked how he was feeling about the work he's been doing at PUSH, and he said, "I didn't think I would ever feel this happy again."

Case study 3 - Participant

Sean

Name of Employability provider

The Hub Skills Academy

Background

Sean visited The Hub with his aunt as she felt he needed some support in finding work.

How it happened / the process

Sean started with our Construction Skills Academy, which was a six-week course running five days a week. He spent three days a week in the classroom along with two days on-site with a local construction company.

What were the challenges and how did we help?

Sean has dyslexia and struggled at school due to this. Ewan from JB Safesite supported him during his time on the construction academy, working with him on a one-to-one basis outwith the academy to ensure he was supported to gain the qualifications.

Outcome and next steps

During his time at the Skills Academy, Sean client gained a multitude of new skills and some important qualifications for starting his career in the construction field.

He registered with a local construction employment agency and was quickly offered work due to his impressive new skillset and up-to-date qualifications.

Case study 4 – Participant

Amy

Name of Employability provider

Positive Futures – Perth Citizens' Advice Bureau

Background

This client is a 28-year-old single mother of four children all under the age of ten. When she was referred to Positive Futures she was struggling to manage day-to-day. Her long-term partner had left her, she had fallen into significant rent arrears and she was struggling to balance her finances with the loss of the family's fulltime wage. Along with rent arrears the client also had significant Council Tax arrears, arrears to her electricity provider and commercial debts which totalled approximately £20,000.

How it happened / the process

The client had recently started to receive statutory sick pay as the stress of the situation had made her unwell and unfit for work, further reducing her income. Through a series of one-to-one meetings, she was helped to maximise her income but correct her benefit awards; she was still claiming tax credits as though a couple, and her ex-partner's income was still being used to calculate towards the household income. Several face-to-face in-depth budgeting sessions were held to collaboratively create a balanced financial statement with the client. After both income maximisation and expenditure reduction the client was left with a budget which still showed a small monthly deficit, but which she was comfortable she could further manage to budget to redress.

What were the challenges and how did we help?

As the client was left with no surplus to offer payments to her creditors and redress her rent arrears specifically (this being the largest threat to her family), after a detailed discussion of her options to receive relief from her debt she decided to apply for bankruptcy. We negotiated with the Council on behalf of the client to make them aware of this and to confirm that a declaration of bankruptcy would not affect her tenancy. Bankruptcy was concluded with the help of our Positive Futures Debt Adviser.

Outcome and next steps

When we followed up with the client, she expressed that her levels of stress and anxiety have dropped to the bare minimum and she has now returned to work feeling very confident about her ability to manage her finances, and that she will not fall into difficulties again.