Local employment partnerships: creating opportunities to unlock local talent

The Government’s key strategic priority for employment is to maximise job opportunities for all. Part of this strategy includes supporting those who have been out of work for some time and who are finding it difficult to access the labour market.

This Briefing has been produced to support employers, providing information about what a local employment partnership is and showcasing examples of its success. It clearly shows the benefits of these partnerships for the employer and the individual.

Key points
- Local employment partnerships (LEPs) provide a commitment that an employer will work with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that priority customers within local communities have access to employment opportunities.
- LEPs help maintain employment in the local community and contribute to wider public health objectives.
- Strong links with Jobcentre Plus mean that employers signed up to a LEP agreement may be eligible for additional support.

What is a local employment partnership?
A local employment partnership (LEP) is a government initiative to encourage employers to form relationships with Jobcentre Plus. It provides a commitment that an employer will work with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that priority customers within local communities have access to employment opportunities. Priority customers include unemployed lone parents and those in receipt of inactive benefits due to ill health or disability.

The commitment is then followed up with discussions to develop a detailed, tailored plan to support local needs. This may involve Jobcentre Plus assisting employers with job matching and screening, open days or the delivery of pre-employment training. The commitment does not affect employers’ decisions to ensure that suitable candidates are recruited into employment.

The practical benefits for employers
There are many benefits for employers involved in LEPs.

In addition to demonstrating that you are an employer committed to supporting the local community with training and employment opportunities, you also have access to job-ready applicants and skills training.
It can also help with:

- recruiting a diverse workforce from all areas of the community
- showing a commitment to assist people back into work
- unlocking potential talent within your local community
- meeting the commitments of the Public Service Agreement 16 target to support individuals with mental health issues with access into employment
- maintaining employment in the local community which contributes to wider public health objectives.

How to set up a local employment partnership agreement

If you are not already working with your local Jobcentre Plus, the first step is to contact your local office. You will be assigned an account manager who will help develop an approach based on local needs and tailored to suit your recruitment requirements.

Jobcentre Plus managers will be able to advise on a wide range of services and pre-employment training on offer.

Planning tips

Implementation of a new initiative can sometimes be difficult to embed into an organisation. These planning tips should help you achieve a successful implementation:

- secure support from a senior manager or board-level member to champion the initiative
- involve Jobcentre Plus from the outset to discuss your local needs and requirements with a dedicated account manager
- establish a small working group to develop and implement the initiative
- consider how you want to measure success and integrate the criteria into your plan
- consult with key stakeholders and get them involved from the outset
- have a dedicated LEP lead within the trust
- identify a suitable area for a pilot scheme before wider rollout
- develop clear role specifications and selection criteria
- encourage employees to become a ‘buddy’ to the individual to provide extra support.

Additional resources and financial support

In April 2009 the Government made additional financial support available for employers to work with those who have found themselves unemployed for longer than six months. Employers are eligible to access a recruitment subsidy of £1000 for each person they recruit who is unemployed and has been claiming jobseeker’s allowance for six months or more. The subsidy would be paid for any job averaging 16 hours a week or more and expected to last for at least 26 weeks, including part-time jobs of 16 hours or more. There may be exceptions, for example, customers with a disability could work fewer hours.

Employers may also be eligible to claim further support for
in-work training from Jobcentre Plus in addition to the Joint Investment Framework funding available through strategic health authorities (SHAs).

NHS Jobs and NHS Careers working with Jobcentre Plus

Strong links with Jobcentre Plus have been developed on a national level through the NHS Jobs recruitment website, providing additional support for employers signing up to a LEP agreement. All opportunities advertised on NHS Jobs are shared with Jobcentre Plus on two levels:

- NHS Jobs sends a daily feed of all new job adverts to the Jobcentre Plus website which remain online for 14 days
- All adverts for vacancies with an Agenda for Change salary band of 1 to 5 and up to band 7 for all administration, clerical, estates and ancillary jobs are fed directly to Jobcentre Plus advisers for one-to-one discussion with clients.

The NHS Careers service provides information on a range of careers in the NHS for both individuals and employers. This includes a telephone and email helpline, website and literature. Employers may find the resources useful at open days and job shops.

Case studies: LEPs in practice

Many trusts have already signed up to a LEP agreement, successfully recruiting a wide range of staff using different initiatives. The types of roles in which trusts have recruited individuals include administration and clerical, ancillary and support roles. However, the principles of a LEP agreement mean that it can be applied to any post a trust advertises. Below are case studies from trusts that have entered a LEP agreement. For further information and additional examples visit our recruitment pages at [www.nhsemployers.org/LEPs](http://www.nhsemployers.org/LEPs).

Innovation in recruitment

Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in London decided to use a LEP after London won the bid to hold the 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games and Homerton was chosen to be the designated hospital. By signing up to a LEP, the trust was able to source local skills and talent to boost staffing levels. Jobcentre Plus arranged open days to attract people to consider working at the hospital. Jobcentre Plus and Groundwork East London helped to highlight the opportunities available to the local community.

Partnership works

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust had a number of vacancies to fill following the development of some new primary care centres. They worked with Eccles College to provide a pre-recruitment course which guaranteed an interview on completion. The second initiative involved running monthly job shops to highlight the opportunities available to the local community.

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust has been successful in winning the North West LEP Award 2009 in the Getting Back to Work category.

Unlocking talent

Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust recognised that young people in particular were under-represented within their workforce. Following discussions with Jobcentre Plus, the trust committed to offering 60 work trials which led to local young people taking up 60 positions over a three-year period.
Other linked programmes and initiatives

**Train to Gain**
This service helps employers improve the skills of their employees, unlock talent and drive improved business performance. Being part of a LEP gives employers easy access to support for developing employee skills at an early stage. [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk).

**Joint Investment Framework**
The Joint Investment Framework (JIF) is a rolling three-year agreement between the SHAs, the Learning Skills Council and Skills for Health to invest up to £100 million nationally to support the education and development of healthcare staff working in Agenda for Change bands 1 to 4. The final year of the three-year programme is 2009/10. Employers should contact their local SHA to find out how to access the funding to support workforce development.

**Skills Pledge**
Employers can demonstrate their commitment to unlocking talent by making a voluntary public commitment to invest in the skills of their employees and support them to improve their skills and gain new qualifications. Support to deliver the pledge commitment can be delivered through Train to Gain. [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk).

**Apprenticeships**
Apprenticeships are a proven method of attracting potential staff to your workforce. Apprenticeship places can develop employees’ skills as they participate in on-the-job training, classroom learning and real workplace experience. [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk).

**In-house training**
Employers who have already invested in their own high-quality training and development programme can now work with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to have that training nationally recognised and accredited.

Accredited training programmes carry increased status and will give employees a recognised qualification. For further information, contact the QCA at recognition@qca.org.uk.

Further information and sharing success

This *Briefing* has been produced to highlight the existence of LEP agreements and the benefits they offer employers. If you are interested in signing up, NHS Employers recommends that you discuss your local requirements with your Jobcentre Plus account manager. If you do not have an account manager, email lep.enq@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk or visit the Jobcentre Plus website at [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/employers](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/employers).

NHS Employers works in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and you can find the latest developments on our recruitment pages at [www.nhsemployers.org/LEPs](http://www.nhsemployers.org/LEPs).

NHS Employers would like to hear about your LEP success stories. Please contact us at recruitmentandretention@nhsemployers.org with your details.
NHS Employers
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NHS Employers represents trusts in England on workforce issues and helps employers to ensure the NHS is a place where people want to work. The NHS workforce is at the heart of quality patient care and we believe that employers must drive the workforce agenda. We work with employers to reflect their views and act on their behalf in four priority areas:

• pay and negotiations
• recruitment and planning the workforce
• healthy and productive workplaces
• employment policy and practice.

NHS Employers is part of the NHS Confederation.

Contact us
For more information on how to become involved in our work, email getinvolved@nhsemployers.org

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