

The Sector Employability Toolkit for Health

Building a sustainable workforce



better **skills**
better **jobs**
better **health**

What is the Sector Employability Toolkit?

Skills for Health in partnership with the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council, has developed a Sector Employability Toolkit (SET) to help health sector employers to find sustainable solutions to one of their most challenging areas of recruitment. Initial entry level posts have historically been not only hard to fill but also subject to high turnover rates.

Through a Local Employment Partnership between Jobcentre Plus, health sector employers and a training provider, the sector can benefit from entrants who have completed contextualised pre-employment training and have proved that they are job ready, prior to being recruited into a paid role.

The SET builds upon the best, evidence based, HR practices, for example, the importance of “recruitment processes” not only seeking to “select and recruit” but also “attract and impress” which will lead, in turn, to improved retention.

Its uniqueness lies in the processes and materials being specifically targeted at a group of candidates, who may be better served by a more supportive approach to usual health sector recruitment procedures. On employment, these individuals prove themselves to be able employees.

How the SET can help employers:

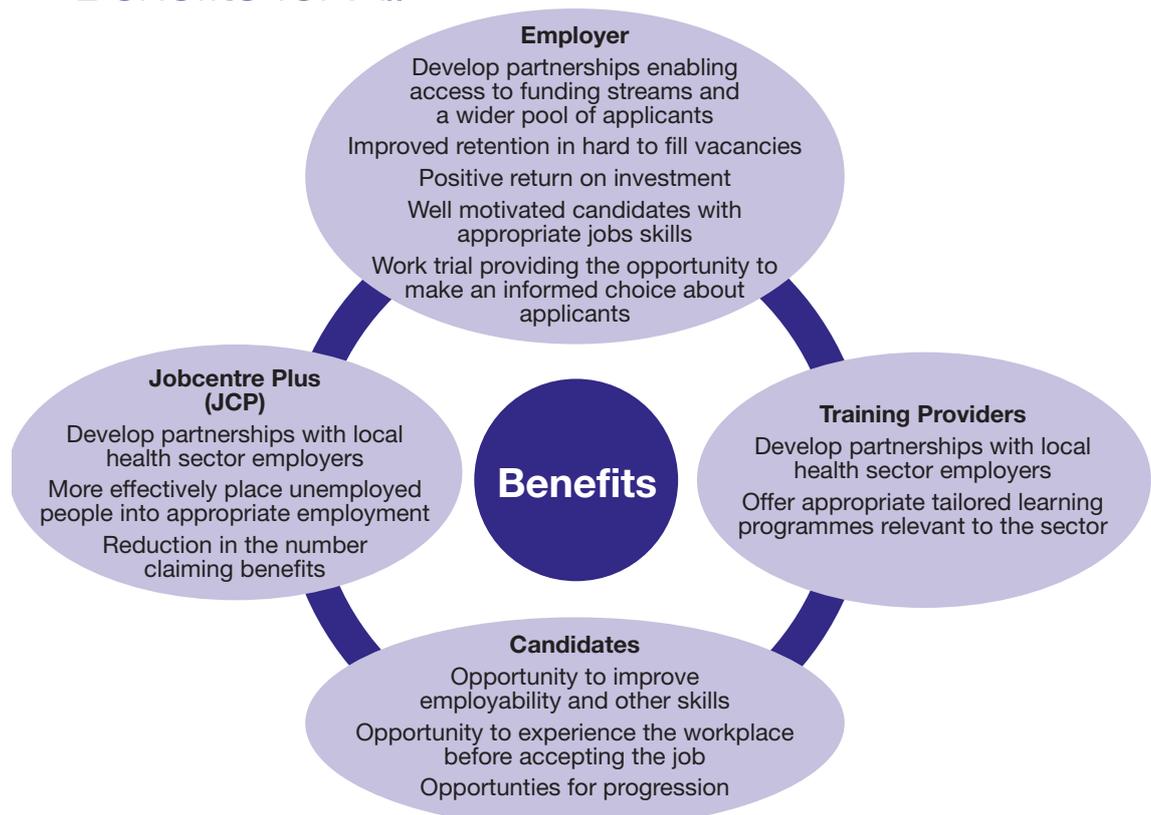
- participants enter employment ‘job ready’
- content tailored to meet the specific needs of the health sector
- reduction in recruitment and retention costs
- training linked to Knowledge and Skills Framework, National Occupational Standards and national standards for adult literacy and numeracy.

The innovative programme features:

- a recruitment checklist for Jobcentre Plus advisers based on the Employability Skills Matrix for the health sector
- an employability checklist to identify the attitude, basic skills and behaviour expected on entry
- advice on selection processes, including interviews and assessments
- a programme consisting of two weeks’ pre-employment training and three weeks’ on the job experience.



Benefits for All



Features of the Sector Employability Toolkit

- The initial recruitment and selection event utilises specialist assessment methods and tools that reflect the employability and recruitment skills needs of entry level posts. For example,
 - literacy, language and numeracy assessments;
 - employability skills based on the Employability Skills Matrix for the health sector;
 - recruitment and interviewing tools which assess both current and potential abilities of those with low level skills, lack of confidence and limited work experience.
- The two week training programme is planned around the skills requirements of the job and delivered in a contextualised way that meets the employer's expressed needs. The training provider and employer work in partnership to achieve this.
- The three week work trial is a continuum of the two weeks' off-the-job training programme. It includes a structure that identifies and meets the learning needs of each individual based on the specific job or area of work being trialled.
- Individuals are given opportunities, within a supportive environment, to show their strengths and areas of weakness, and potential is identified. Feedback to each individual on their progress increases confidence and motivation and enables them to improve where necessary.
- The assessment process identifies future potential as well as current abilities and skills.

Elaine's SET success story

Since leaving school early to have her first child, Elaine has had lots of different jobs. However personal commitments, and few qualifications, have made it hard to find suitable work that fit in with her family's needs. The hunt for suitable employment that would fit around her children was more of a challenge than she first envisaged,

“ I hadn't banked on the credit crunch making it so hard to find work. I was feeling really bored and frustrated. Then one day my Jobcentre Plus adviser told me about this new scheme. She told me a bit about the jobs on offer and that if I were accepted onto the programme it wouldn't affect my benefits. We filled the form out there and then. ”

Elaine really enjoyed the five week programme. During the two week off the job training course, she found out more about working in the NHS and she particularly enjoyed the opportunity to visit the hospital where she would undertake the three week work trial. At that stage she wasn't sure if catering was the right choice for her. The programme soon confirmed that she had made the right choice,

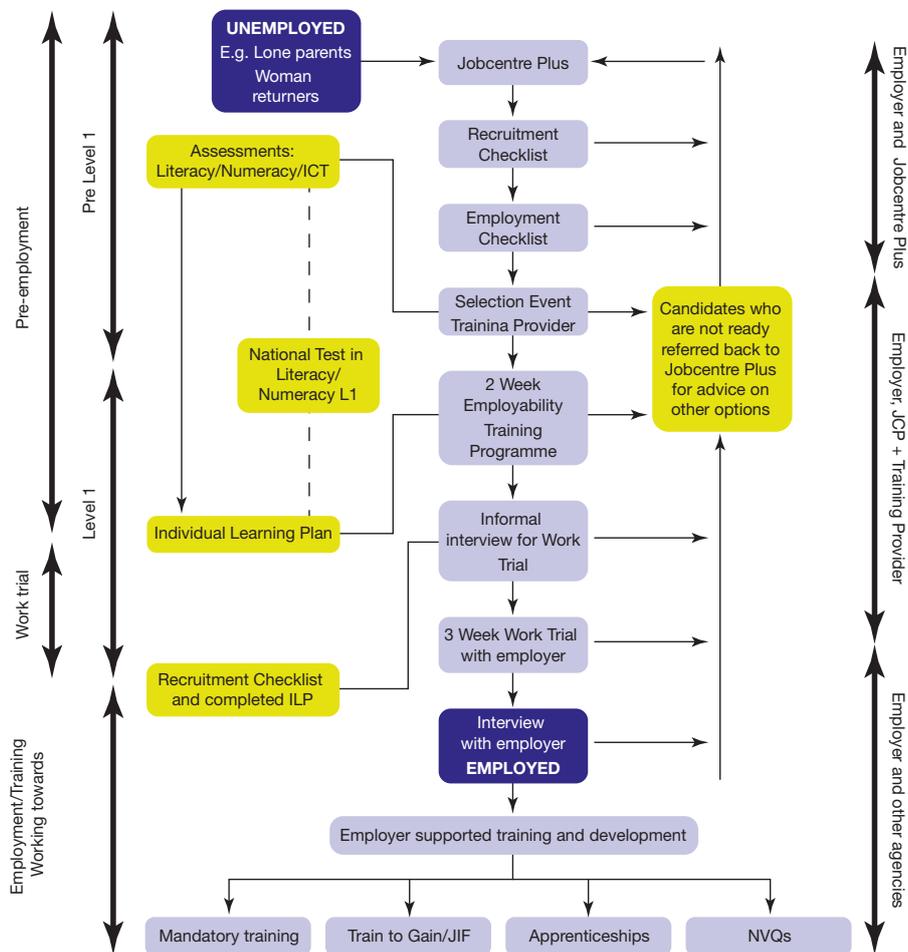
“ During the work trial I worked across all three areas of the catering department. We didn't just watch, we actually learnt how to do the job and then we did it! I really liked learning this way. ”

It's no surprise that Elaine was offered a job as catering assistant at the end of the Programme. Departmental managers had recognised her potential and were already planning how they would support her to develop her skills and achieve her goals.

“ Being part of this programme has given me a much needed confidence boost. My children are really proud of me. I hope I get the opportunity to do some qualifications in my new job. Now I can start planning things for me and my family. ”



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Evaluation points to success

Evaluation shows that the SET has been successful in helping the long term unemployed and other target groups, to move into initial entry level posts and subsequently sustainable employment in the health sector. Earlier research has shown workers recruited in this way have retention rates of around 90% as opposed to other more direct recruitment methods.

To find out more or obtain a copy of the resources go to

<http://ln.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/employability> or contact musrat.amin@skillsforhealth.org.uk