

White Book

**Good Practice Examples in Supported
Employment from Slovakia,
the Czech Republic and the Great Britain**

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Introduction

Good practice examples teach us. To take a look on our work from a different perspective, after some time, or acquired experience. With the benefit of hindsight, we are often able to find out and realize various connections, facts, and also the impact of our work. Through good practice examples, others can learn from us.

In the case of good practice examples we are offering you, we need to add that not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic – where these examples come from – it is not a common practice for disabled people to have a job within an open labour market. These positive examples are often outcomes of work of enthusiastic professionals, in some cases even parents, or disabled people themselves. If there is a job taken and retained by a disabled person, it is definitely a case which should be documented, and the steps and activities that have lead to it should be described.

Offered good practice examples document individual cases of employees with a disability. Many of them provide their story through their own eyes.

They are able to describe, what the role of an employee means to them. Today, many of them are not considering their situation to be a special one. They do not see that many of their peers still attend social care facilities or are spending days at home - without work or activity.

Other type of example, you can find in this brochure, describe the perspective of an employer. Cafe Radnička is a good example presenting not only an opportunity for creation of jobs, but it is also an example of the long-term sustainability of jobs for severely disabled people. Fact that the job retention is often more important than the ability to find a job is documented also in examples from the Czech Republic and Great Britain.

The last forms of good examples are services that provide support for disabled people on their route towards work and independence. In Slovakia, these are mostly Agencies of Supported Employment, in the Czech Republic in addition to Agencies; there are also active social care facilities which provide this type of help. The system of community and other types of support for clients is obvious in Great Britain.

We hope these good practice examples will inspire you in how to do good things even in a better way – similarly to the way our partnership successfully did it in the EQUIP Project.

Good Practice Examples from Slovakia

Courtesy of the Agency for Supported Employment in Bratislava and its clients.
Special thanks belong to Viera Záhorcová and Eva Michalcová from APZ, n.o. Bratislava.

Individual Work with Clients

Long-term support and help

Important indicators:

- Long-term support of the family,
- Supervision at social communication and preventing issues caused by credulousness of the client toward people and environment,
- Appropriate communication and support of the family and the employer.

It is a 27 year old woman with hearing problems living and fighting with issues common for every person with this kind of problem. Key factor in this case is the support of her mother, who cares of her daughter in a very systematic and intensive way.

This client finished a primary school and a vocational school. After finishing her studies she was trying to get employed in several places. These efforts were not successful, so she became a client of the Agency for Supported Employment in Bratislava. The employees of this agency - thanks to the close cooperation with the client and her family - were thinking about the most suitable job for this client. Characteristic features of the client – independence, good communication skills, handiness and dexterity were considered as important elements for selection of her employment. However, it was necessary to take into consideration that this client is also very credulous and it is very easy to influence her and that is why she needs a supervision, support, help and direction. Family, especially the mother of this client, who regularly controlled her daughter, played an important role in overcoming these issues.

The client has found her first stable job in an internet café, where she learned how to serve clients, how to communicate with clients, etc. In addition to that she also helped at simple working tasks such as transportation of products on a cart from one facility to another, help in transportation of products from store, fulfilling simple tasks at post office, etc. At the same time she has also learned how to manage her working time – it was necessary to be on time and she had to learn to keep her breaks. It was also necessary for her to learn how to behave to customers – she had to learn to behave politely and kindly despite her own bad moods.

The owner of this internet café (her employer) also meant a great contribution to this client. He was very patient and cooperated on solution of every newly raised issue which appeared during their cooperation. One of the problems discovered during this work was that this client was very credulous and could not face people who wanted to abuse her or to distinguish between honest interest of people and self-interest of others. As her job included work with people, it brought also an opportunity for this client to establish new contacts



and friendships, not all of them positive once. That is why this client needed and still would need a constant supervision.

This client worked in the internet café for two years but lost her job as the café ceased to exist. Thanks to gained experience and skills, but also working habits, it was no problem to find a new job for her. Very quickly after she lost her job in the café, she found a new job in a sheltered workplace providing catering services. She is working in the catering service (the name of the sheltered workshop is Manna) already for three years. Current employer appreciates qualities of this client – especially in the area of transportation of products where she can use her very good orientation skills and perfect knowledge of Bratislava streets. She is very consistent in her work, has a necessary self-esteem for this job and is very thankful for this opportunity.

Various Forms of Employment for Disabled Citizens

Important indicators:

- Employability of disabled people in the region
- Re-qualification as a chance to complete education
- Career counselling

Client (age 34) started to work with the Agency of Supported Employment in Bratislava during the implementation of the Supported Circle Project funded by the EQUAL Initiative. This project was implemented in the Pezinok region in 2006 with the goal to increase awareness and quality of counselling provided to families with a disabled member. There was a self-help group established within this project, and also a regional branch of the Association for the Support of Mentally Disabled People in Pezinok was involved there. Employment of disabled people, as one of the potential opportunities how to start an active life for these people, was perceived as a key factor within the project.

During the project implementation and also today, the client is living with her parents in a small village located near Pezinok. This fact is important factor from the employability perspective of this client as there is a lack of job vacancies directly in the place of her residence and it is necessary for her to commute to work.

As a child, this client was a student of a special school in Bratislava, and after she finished this school, she spent a year at home as there was no other opportunity for her. Later she started to attend the social care facility Hestia in Pezinok for children and youth with mental handicap. Social care provided in Hestia is focused on the improvement of self-service activities and training of basic routines necessary for everyday life. Clients are distributed into training groups where they learn how to clean, do a laundry; prepare simple drinks and foods, etc. The client attended this service till she reached the age of 25.

In 2006, the family got involved into the already mentioned project initiated by the Agency of Supported Employment. The client participated within this project at training activities leading towards employment and after that got a job in a sheltered work-

shop Efekt in Pezinok. It was a work in a bakery and her job was to pack and to weight products.

Taking into consideration the disability of this client, she can have a work assistant – and this position was taken by her mother, who was providing transportation to her daughter but also to other disabled employees of this sheltered workshop.

The client was successful in this job, and did it with an enthusiasm and responsibility. In addition to a good quality work, she was also someone who was able to create a nice atmosphere there as she was always positive and nice and was able to influence also mood of others. She was employed in the sheltered workshop for one year. After this period, the workshop ceased to exist. However, the client was not able to stay without work and that is why her family decided to establish a job opportunity for her directly in their house.

The family used the benefits provided by the Labour Office and established a sheltered workshop – relaxation centre. Before the centre was established, the client went through requalification courses organized by the Labour Office after which she started to work in the centre as a masseur.

In addition to work, the client has also many hobbies – she is a member of a choir, she does exercises, attends various cultural events. These activities, even though they were very diverse, did not fulfil her need to work. Thanks to acquired experience, she and her family are aware that it is necessary to teach her every day activities, important for independence of this client. Very systematic and enthusiastic mother who provides necessary support and help to this client but who – on the other side – strives to help her to reach the independence, is again a very strong element here.

Education Brings Development also in a Carrier Development

Important indicators:

- Early intervention and care of a good quality
- Support of independence
- Complex personal and skill development
- Long-term education

This is a 31 years old client with the Down Syndrome, trained gardener, with a certificate gained at the vocational school for physically handicapped youth in Bratislava. After he finished school, the client worked at the social care facility Integra as a gardener and also as an assistant in the kitchen, maintenance and cleaning, and he also partially took care of the



clients there. Even though he worked there successfully for 7 years, he had to change the job after a sudden injury.

After one year of sickness absence, he was able – thanks to the cooperation with the Agency of Supported Employment in Bratislava – to find a new job in a Senior Home Archa in Bratislava. He is working there already for three years.

In the beginning, he worked there as a support carer – he was helping to feed the clients, to bestow them; he was there to talk with them. Later he started to work in the kitchen as the main dishwasher. This work requires precision, patience, and consistency. His responsibility is to assort dishes, to put white dishes into a dish washer and to wash black dish manually. The work this client is doing is physically very demanding – he has to stand all day, but he also trains his fine motor skills. However, the most important for this client is the fact that this is a work with people and it is his strength as he is very communicative, sociable, courteous, and empathic.

He was able to use skills he gained through his work with seniors also in his private life – this client helped his mother to take care and accompany his grandfather till the very last moment of his life.

The fact that this client is willing to continue in training and to make progress in his carrier is also very important. He accepted the offer to attend a course for waiters, where he acquires skills necessary to get a job at a cafe. In addition to that, he is also taking classes in Feuerstein method of mathematic skills development.

Thanks to his parents who lead him towards active life, he is also keen on sports – specifically skiing. He participated three times in Special Olympic Games, where he won three gold, one silver and one bronze medals.

Examples of Work of Agencies for Supported Employment

The mission of agencies' activities is to help to find or to retain a job for people with disabilities, or to long-term unemployed people. Despite the fact that there are many common features of agencies, there can be also some differences. In addition to standard procedures which are specific for the supported employment service, their activities are often based on needs of region, approach to specific target groups, or individual approach of people working there.

The Café Radnicka in Bratislava is an example of the sheltered workshop, which was created thanks to cooperation of the non-profit non-governmental organisation and the local government of the capital of Slovakia. The sheltered workshop is exceptional because it offers the same services like any other café in the city center of Bratislava while the service is being provided by the waiters with mental disability under the guidance of two qualified waiters. Despite the intense competition of other cafes and restaurants situated in the proximity, the Café Radnicka has found its clients who come back not only due to increasing offer of refreshment but also because of good mood and plenty of cultural events both for adults and children. This is the example of the sheltered workshop, which unifies the principle of charity with the sale of services competitive also in the free market. The aim of the sheltered workshop The Café Radnicka is to create jobs for people with a disability in the free labour market.

The background information

The unemployment rate of handicapped people is very high. For disabled it is even more difficult to find a suitable job, if there are healthy people out-of-work and willing to find employment. Having a job means for people a step towards economic and social independence. It is a chance for their personal development, further education



and decision-making for their own lives.

Many of mentally disabled children managed to complete school education, but their involvement into the labour market has been always problematic. The situation can be aptly described using the words of Mrs. Zahorcova, who dedicated many years of her career to children with mental handicap: „The whole problem of educating mentally disabled people is, that we do not teach them what they might need in their life, but what we think they could manage“.

Relation of healthy people to disabled has been full of prejudices. The people around the model project Café Radnička wanted to start the fight against the prejudice and perception of the disabled by the majority population.

NGO Inclusion in cooperation with The Agency for Supported Employment has prepared a full participation project for people with a disability to work in the free labour market. Café Radnička is the first sheltered workshop where Bratislava town authority, together with the NGO Inclusion, has attempted to create equal working conditions for persons with disabilities.

In cooperation with the District Labour Office in Bratislava, the sheltered workshop was opened in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, in January 2001. Nowadays, after 5 years of operation, five young people with a disability work in the Café Radnička as waiters in partnership with two qualified waiters

At the beginning, persons with learning disabilities attended a 6 month training course where teachers from the Hotel Academy School trained them to work as waiters. The training was complemented by the educational activity provided by trainers from the Agency for Supported Employment. The candidates received practical support and advice about benefits, communication, assertiveness and other employment related issues. To ensure the quality of the service for clients, further short-term trainings for the waiters with learning disabilities have been provided on regular basis (once per trimester or even more frequently, if needed).



Later, the products offered to clients were enriched by mixed drinks, sweets, fruit desserts and ice-cream sundaes prepared by waiters according to previously set recipes. Diverse cultural programs for adults and children take place in Radnička regularly and in this way attract clients to come and spend time. These includes for example: “Tee at five...”, “Today you will be served by...” The latter is a program, when a famous person (mainly an actor or an actress) is invited to the Cafe Radnička every third Thursday in the month. He or she prepares a new drink, which later becomes a part of the menu, and during next two hours he or she serves it to the guests. The Café Radnička can be rent for special occasions, such as book presentations, club meetings, introduction of grant programs, family celebrations, press conferences, which means another source of finances for the Café’s operation. Hand crafts and products made in other twenty sheltered workshops across Slovakia are also on sale in Radnička, such as rugs, soft furnishings, ceramics and a wide range of gifts.

The training centre of waiters and other operational staff for people with disability was launched in the Cafe Radnička in 2002. After the training, the Agency for Supported Employment helps the trainees to find a job in other cafes and restaurants in Bratislava.

The main stakeholders involved

The Agency for Supported Employment – was created as a pilot project in three cities of Slovakia thanks to the twinning project „Support of employment of disabled people”. The project was implemented by the Phare and Other Aid Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, National Labour Office of Slovakia, the Ministry of Social Insurance and Generations of Austria, Chamber of Labour in Austria during the years 2001-2002. Nowadays 32 Agencies of supported employment operate in Slovakia.

NGO Inclusion – launched the project „The Cafe Radnička” as a model activity. The people from the NGO had experience with the sheltered workshops and knew in detail the procedure and legislative background necessary for their running. Therefore the NGO was responsible for the communication with the District Labour Office. The NGO Inclusion administers the sheltered workshop the Cafe Radnička, although the vision is to see Radnička more and more independent. For example, NGO manages the issue of cooperation and communication with sheltered workshops which sell their products in Radnička, the chief of the café is responsible for other supplies.

Bratislava town authority – was the main partner of the NGO in launching the project. A firm conviction of the Deputy Mayor of Bratislava, Mrs. Demeterová and very good cooperation with the director of the NGO Inclusion, Mrs. Záhorcová, was important for the success of the project. Bratislava town authority helped with finding suitable premises. The Bratislava town authority rent premises of the Municipal Museum in the proximity of the Old Town Hall.

District Labour Office in Bratislava (local state administration body) – provided initial financial support for creation of the jobs for disabled people. After negotiations representatives of the NGOs persuaded the employees of the District Labour Office to increase the initial financial support to maximum limit, which was 200,000 SKK per 1 job, in total the District Labour Office supported the project with 800,000 SK (creation of job for 4 people).

Hotel Academy – prior to the opening of the café, the teachers of the Hotel Academy provided an initial 6 month training course for waiting staff.

OSF – Open Society Foundation in Slovakia supported the starting of the project financially by a grant.

The output and outcome.

After 5 years of operation the outputs and outcomes are:

- The Cafe Radnička is well-established cafe in the city centre of the capital of Slovakia, in the proximity of the Old Town Hall
- Employment of 5 waiters with a disability and 2 qualified waiters
- Development of new services and products offered to visitors and clients
- The sheltered workshop Cafe Radnička helps to sell and market products of other 20 sheltered workshops and socially oriented organizations across Slovakia
- The sheltered workshop serves as the training centre for other disabled people and helps them to find a job
- Contribution to the economical and social independence of the disabled people. The disabled members of the staff are willing to work and continue in their jobs, they have learned how to communicate with people.
- The Cafe Radnička helps to promote the idea of solidarity with handicapped people in public and this makes people understand that employment of disabled people makes sense.

Factors of failure and success

The strategy of the project was based from its beginning on the fact, that the café must be situated in the city centre with many potential guests.

The training of disabled covered two areas – waiting staff skills as well as communication and other employment related issues.

Multi-sectoral cooperation of the NGO (NGO Inclusion, NGO Agency for Supported Employment)– local government authority (Bratislava Municipal Office, Municipal Museum) – local state administration body (District Labour Office) – secondary school (Hotel Academy School) – donors (Open Society Foundation and later, also other donors) and many sponsors from business sector and many individual volunteers. Interesting cultural events and programs that attract visitors regularly visit the café. The most difficult thing was to stabilize the team of professional waiters (healthy members of the team). Prevention of the staff turnover was reached after 2 years.

The lessons learned

This kind of the sheltered workshop – the café can cover the running costs (salaries, rent for premises, social insurance payments of the staff, etc.) from its own income after 4 or 5 years of operation.

Cooperation with the Heifer International Foundation

One of many activities of this agency located in Kežmarok is also cooperation with the American foundation Heifer International. This foundation began its activities in Slovakia already in 1995. In 2004, this foundation started to cooperate with the civic association „Community – Place for Everyone“ and after the Agency of Supported Employment was established at this civic association, this cooperation was continued by the Agency.

Programme Heifer Slovakia belongs into the section of international programs for Central and Eastern Slovakia of the Heifer Project International. It's goal is to react to constant changes in needs of families suffering from hunger and poverty and through that to contribute to unity and maintenance of peace and justice. The basic strategy of this project is called „Gift for Gift“ and is based on providing families with small farming animals, skills and knowledge in farming while families and individuals involved into this project became donors as well.

Goat Farming in Settlements near High Tatras

This project was implemented in the village Stráne pod Tatrami and supported development of working skills and abilities at long-term unemployed clients of the Agency. Project was focused on goat farming, production and processing of goat milk with the goal to improve nutritional value of food for children of project participants. It was quite difficult to start this project – village Stráne pod Tatrami belongs to villages where the majority population is Roma and 85% of these people are unemployed. Before the first families were selected, detailed monitoring of potential project participants was done. Selection criteria established by the Agency were: social conditions in the family, number of children in the family and total income in the family. As majority of long-term unemployed Roma people from this village are clients of this Agency, its employees were well aware of problems and issues of these families and had enough entrance data about every potential project participant. Criteria set by Heifer Foundations were: suitable animal shelter, preparation of sufficient quantity of animal feed, and also ability of a family to take care of the animals.

Basic goal of the work of the Agency in the project was to provide its clients with necessary skills, to help them to renew and maintain their working habits and through that to help them to secure better conditions at the labour market. Already during the preparation phase, the project participants were supported in animal shelters construction or animal feed preparation. During this phase, seven families profiled as those able to accept animals to their homes. Although few years already passed since the project implementation, these seven families still continue in the goat farming – and the best of them is Mr. Mišalko, man with a handicap. He also involved families of his two sons into goat farming and the breed increased from one to five goats. As both of his sons were able to find a job, Mr. Mišalko takes care of the goats with his daughters-in-law.

In the next phase, another 21 families were chosen for development of the project. However, as the success of the first phase was so overwhelming, the organization was not so cautious at the selection of the families for the next phase and families started to leave the project. Many of them found out it is much more advantageous for families if a father finds a job and gains a regular income for the family. Such an income is several times higher than the income from goat farming. Another issue the organization faced was a fact that some families got involved into the project in order to get animals for free, but they were not willing to take care of them.

Rabbit Farming – My Leisure Time Activity

This project was implemented in the village Velká Lomnica. Even though it was focused on cooperation of parents and children, the Agency participated in the selection of project participants in a similar way as it was mentioned in the case of the goat farming project. Out of total number of 11 participating families, five were from the group of long-term unemployed citizens – clients of the Agency. This project was very successful as the motivation and renewal of working habits lead to employment of at least one of the parents of the long-term unemployed families.

Even though it might seem that one of the basic goals of the project – to help families through the animal farming - was not fulfilled, the more important goal - renewal of working habits and gain of new skills was successfully met at majority of long-term unemployed clients. **Thanks to the change of thinking and employment, the social-economic situation of these families was changed tremendously.**

Supported Employment through the Eyes of Clients

Terézia Ráchelová, Sheltered Workshop - Cafe Radnička Terézia



I work in the sheltered workshop – Cafe Radnička already since 2001. My employer is the civic association Inclusion, which – together with the Hotel Academy – started to train twelve di-sabled people who wanted to work as waiters. In December, all of them came to the Agency of Supported Employment to learn how to do it. Out of twelve, there were only five of us who stayed and in January 2001, they have called us to attend the training. We were trained for four months in the Agency of Supported Employment and for one month directly in Cafe Radnička. All five of us went through this half-year course and after that started to work in the cafe located in the centre of Bratislava. In May 2001, we became waiters. At the beginning, three people were working there at the same time – two waiters and one cashier. After short time we were working in couples – one waiter and one cashier.

We work for four hours a day in three groups: from 10.00 to 13.30, from 13.30 to 17.30 and from 17.30 to 20.30.

As a specialty of the house we serve sundaes. I make them under a supervision of cashier. My favourite ones are ice coffee and a fruit sundae.

Radnička gives me work and many opportunities to meet new people. I especially enjoy various events organized there – such as Tee at Five or Today You Will Be Served By – with Slovak celebrities involved. We also love Radnička Fair. The last summer, we organized the Cultural Summer of Radnička.

The first thing I do when I come to Radnička is that I switch the lights and the coffee machine on. Then I change, clean the floor, dust, check the menu and clean the trays for cakes.

If I didn't have this job, I would just sit at home. Also that is a reason, why I enjoy working there – especially when we have a lot of guests. If we don't have enough guests, there is nothing to do. People are entering the cafe sometimes also because we play nice music – they are often asking me what kind of music it is. We have many older guests who are coming for a coffee; younger guests prefer hot chocolate. They like the place as it is very cosy and nice, but also because it is a non-smoking cafe. When they take their places, I bring them the menu and light a candle – they like it. Even though I like to work in Radnička very much, in the future I would like to try also something else.

Good Practice Examples from the Czech Republic

Courtesy of the Czech Union for Supported Employment, Rytmus Agency,
APLA Prague and clients of supported employment agencies.
Special thanks belong to Eliška El - Mohammadi from the Czech Union
for Supported Employment in Prague.

Individual Work with Clients

Strong Motivation of a Client Is Important

In the beginning of 2007, Mr. Ondrej approached an Agency for Supported Employment with a request to find a job outside the Social Care Institution he was living in. During his long-term stay in this institution, he was able to gain working experience in many areas (e.g. gardening, laundry, bricklaying). He worked for a long time as a porter and he also helped to organize football matches there, however, these jobs were paid only poorly.

Mr. Ondrej was always very responsible, despite that he felt the need for a change. After several months of waiting period he signed an Agreement on supported employment service provision and with the help of his counsellor, he started to look for a new job.

The planning of the right way for finding a new job, approaching and negotiations with employers took several months. After that period, one suitable offer appeared – one company was looking for somebody who would distribute their advertising leaflets. Mr. Ondrej decided to try this job. At the beginning, there was an assistant helping him, but this support was decreasing over the time. The client was able to gain independence and later he was able to do this job independently without any support. As this job was a part-time one and took him only one day a week, Mr. Ondrej with his counsellor continued to look for another job.

The Agency for Supported Employment that was working with Mr. Ondrej implemented within its activities so-called audit of job opportunities. It is one of effective tools for searching for potential vacancies directly at an employer (know-how of the civic association Jurta, Osmy den). This audit was implemented in a chain store and the result was that they have found several potential job opportunities suitable also for disabled people. Mr. Ondrej decided to get a job in a department responsible for bottle assorting. One of his duties was also to take care of the shopping carts at the parking place in front of the supermarket.

Mr. Ondrej started to work there after a doctor's check-up and after the contract with the employer was signed. In the beginning of his work, Mr. Ondrej was provided with the support of a job assistant who helped him to get an orientation within his job – to differentiate between various kinds of bottles and bottle crates. Also in this position, the range of the assistance was decreasing as Mr. Ondrej was - after few weeks - able to do his work without any support. After the contract ended up, no other contract was signed as the chain store underwent through large personnel changes and Mr. Ondrej lost his job.

However, this negative situation did not discourage Mr. Ondrej and he continued to actively look for another potential job. Within this period he went through several ineffective negotiations with employers. Consequently, the agency implemented another audit of job opportunities in one food-processing company and found out a vacancy for somebody who would wash dishes. The employer welcomed the op-

portunity to undergo a trial period with Mr. Ondrej to find out whether both sides would be satisfied with the cooperation. Despite the fact that Mr. Ondrej was a very responsible worker, the employer was afraid to sign a contract with a mentally disabled man who was stripped of his legal rights. The employer's management organized a meeting with the job consultant and with the person who took care of Mr. Ondrej where some of the pointless fears, prejudices and myths were explained. After this useful session, Mr. Ondrej started to work in this company – the contract was signed for three months of trial period (similarly to other new employees in this company) with the promise that if his performance will be satisfying, the contract will be prolonged.

Also in this position, Mr. Ondrej had an assistant there who supported him in the orientation in the new working place and fulfilling his new duties and gradually, the range of the assistant's support was decreasing over time. In addition to the help of the assistant, there is a great natural support within the working place for Mr. Ondrej. He can communicate independently, he relates to his colleagues very well and became a natural member of the team. Assistance was finished after few weeks and after the negotiations with employer. And what does Mr. Ondrej say about his work? „I am happy here and I am able to do this work alone. My boss praises me and is satisfied with my work.“

After Mr. Ondrej started to work for this company, a change occurred in the distribution of leaflets. He did not want to continue in this work so he found and also trained another worker who is distributing leaflets instead of him.

Currently, Mr. Ondrej is absolutely independent and is still working for the food-processing company. Cooperation with the agency Rytmus Benešov which took almost two years was closed by agreement as Mr. Ondrej found a suitable work and did not need the support anymore.

(This experience was shared by Bc. Pavla Fleischhansová,
a job consultant of Rytmus Benešov, o.p.s.)

No Need to Give up

Course of service of Ms. K.

Ms. K. showed the interest to be involved into the supported employment service after she saw the presentation of an agency for supported employment in the social care institution in Slatiňany, in February 2008.

In May 2008, the capacity of the agency enabled the involvement of Ms. K into the service and so the agency signed the Agreement on Provision of a Social Rehabilitation through a Supported Employment Method (May 27, 2008).

In June 2008, the first individual plan (IP) was created for this client. The client showed the interest to work in a kindergarten or in a shop, to learn how to use a mobile phone and a PC. Ms K also stated some wishes which were not directly related to the supported employment service – specifically she expressed her wish to live in Chrudim.

Already at the beginning of the service – in June 2008 – the agency contacted JP Kontakt company in Pardubice. The entrance interview went well and the client was accepted. However, this work ended up on the second day as Ms K did not get the statement of her doctor that she can wash windows three times a year.

At the end of May, the client had an interview in the Elektromontáže Jiří Rykíř company – they were looking for a cleaning lady for a three months period. Ms K started to work there in July and stayed there till the end of September 2009. She worked there part time for four hours a day. At the beginning, she was supported by an assistant, but after one month she was able to work independently.

On October 10, 2008, Ms K had an interview in a Mothers' Centre called Mama Club and she started to work there on October 15. She works there as a cleaning lady for two hours every day in a week.

Gained Skills of the Client:

- The client was able to travel safely from Chrudim to Slatiňany and back. She is able to travel independently (to find a bus stop, to take off the bus on a correct stop and to find her way to the organization she is working for). This learning process was supported by the assistance which was gradually decreasing.
- The client knows what it means to be employed, she understands that she is getting paid for work she is doing, she knows what a contract means, and where she gets the money from, but also what should she pay for. She also visited a bank within the service.
- The client learned how to use a mobile phone (how to pick up the phone and how to call three or four important numbers)
- The client was able to set up relationships with colleagues, she participated at the informal party, and from time to time she is also in contact with one colleague from Elektromontáže company.



On March 18, 2009, the agreement on the service provision with the client was closed.

The client wants to continue in her cooperation with the agency. Once in two months she is attending so-called „Meetings after Every Two Months“ – meetings for former clients of Rytmus who are employed.

Service Statistics:

Decision-making on cooperation:	6 hours
Phase of search for work:	22 hours
Planning (individual, crises plans, final plan):	11 hours
Job clubs:	11 hours
Consultations after the client was employed:	30 hours
Assistance:	120 hours
Travelling within the service:	25 hours
Others (meetings, supervision, skill evaluation, training):	8 hours
Administration (minutes, other administrative issues):	7 hours
TOTAL:	240 hours



Supported Employment through the Eyes of Clients

HOW DID I FIND A JOB

Author: Petra Dokulilová

Co-authors: Adéla Černá (student of a Hihger Vocational School in Pardubice, department of social work), Jaroslava Kučerová (Rytmus Chrudim, o.p.s.)

Prepared in January and February 2008



„My name is Petra. I am 25. I found out about supported employment at a Labour Office. I wanted to work so that I would meet new people and have money. I approached Rytmus so that they would help me to find a work.

My Cooperation with the Rytmus Agency

I met a job consultant. I talked to her about the work I would like to do – for example to help in a kitchen or to be a cleaning lady. I talked to her about what I can do. I can cook, read, do the laundry and clean. Together with my consultant, I was writing my CV, learned how to make a phone call and how to communicate, and we were also talking about a job contract. I was trying to find a job through a PC or newspapers. It was more fun to do it through a PC.

I was also visiting Job Clubs where we were talking about various issues – for example how to work with adverts, discrimination in a work, how to take a day off, etc.

I was working for the Sodexho company before. I was working as a support staff in a kitchen there – I was putting dishes into a dish washer. After that I worked for an electro-company where I took care of cleaning offices, workshops, rooms, corridors and toilets. I replaced one lady there who needed to leave the town for some period. After that we visited another employer - o.s. Šance pro Tebe – and they offered me a work trial for one day. As they were satisfied with me, we signed a contract. I work there since August. I am responsible for cleaning a club, hall, kitchen and a conference room there. I like my colleagues and a nice environment. A job assistant was supporting me directly for one month, now I am independent.

What the Work Mean to Me

Money, new people. I am responsible for keys and cleaning. I am useful.

What Have I Learned

I have learned something new. For example how to use a vacuum cleaner. I have to fill in my time sheet. I can use phone and travel to work.

Now I am attending meetings where I improve my work with time, I learn how to fill in various forms.“

Course of the Service:

April/2004	first contact (recommendation of a labour office), service agreement signed
June/2004	client employed in a company canteen for one year
September/2004	partial invalidity pension approved

January/2005	supported employment service closed
Spring 2005	job in the canteen ended up
March/2006	group counselling (for the Labour Office in Chrudim)
July/2006	agreement on supported employment service signed (for the second time she became a client of this service)
(up to November/2006	– individual counselling for the Labour Office in Chrudim)
March/2007	practice in a bakery in a supermarket
April - June/2007	job contract signed – cleaning lady for a electro company (for two months)
August/2007- present	job contract signed – cleaning lady (employer: o.s. Šance pro Tebe)

HOW I SAVED MONEY FOR A PIG

Petr, 22 years old

- I attended a special school in village Běstviný.
- After that I attended vocational school in Chroustovice. I became a bricklayer.
- Since my childhood, I was living in a village. I live in a family house with my parents. At home I do what is necessary (I cut grass, help with wood, help with animals and also with pig-sticking).
- During winters I like to work with PC. I like to ride a bicycle and during summers I like to swim and pick mushrooms.



How did I find my Way to Rytmus Agency

- After finishing school I started to go to the Labour Office (2006 – January 2009)
- I found out about Rytmus through the Labour Office.
- I signed an agreement on counselling with the Labour Office (Labour Office paid for my counselling in Rytmus and my travel expenses for my visits of the Rytmus agency in Chrudim)
- I signed the agreement with Rytmus and acquired my job consultant.

What was I doing in Rytmus

- We were talking about what I would like to do. I wanted to work in a warehouse, or outside (to cut grass, rake leaves), or in a forest, or in a car wash.
- I tried to look for a job. I was looking through the internet.
- I learned how to call an employer (to ask for a job). I was talking to a Dictaphone so that I would know how my voice sounds in a phone.
- I was getting ready for an interview (how should I look and how to get ready)
- We were talking about what should be written in a job contract and when I can be fired.

- I was attending Job Clubs. We always agreed on a topic and then we were talking about it (polite behaviour during an interview, search for adverts, etc.). There were always 6 - 7 people in a group.

My First Interview

- I found out about publicly beneficial work at the municipality in Skuteč from my job consultant.
- I decided to get involved.
- My job consultant arranged an appointment for me.
- We went to look what my job would be.
- The employer was not present, but the workplace was presented to us by his deputy.
- He showed me where and what would I do there.
- We agreed when I would start.
- The employer got a support from the Labour Office – that is why I get part of my salary from the Labour Office and the rest from the municipality in Skuteč.
- I have started working in January 2009 – this was based on an agreement and since March I work under a regular contract.

What Do I Do in My Work

I start to work at 7 a.m. and work till 1 p.m.
I have one main break for snack.
I have 7 colleagues – we are a group called „Speedy Company“

The work is managed every morning by Mr Kopecký.

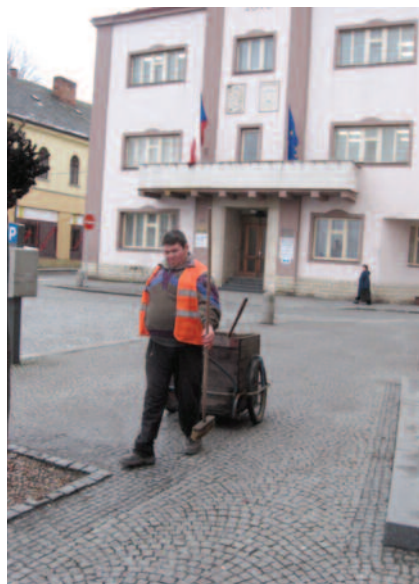
- I shovel snow.
- I spread the road salt.
- I clean the square and residential area.
- We were also cleaning the mess in the old sport hall before they started to demolish it.
- I clean and paint a railing.

What Should I Take Care for in My Job

- Not to oversleep in a morning and be on time
- To do a work I get
- I have to do my work properly
- I cannot be rude to my superiors
- When I am ill or I need to go to a doctor, I have to call and tell my boss or to let him know one day ahead (to fill in necessary forms and not to forget to get a paper from my doctor).

What the Job Gives Me

- I am not constantly at home as before. In the morning I am in the work, in the afternoon I am at home.
- Work brings me new ideas.
- I can buy what I want. For example, I saved money to buy a pig.



Good Practice Example – Agency of Supported Employment

APLA Praha, Central part of Czech Republic, civic association – supported employment for people with autism

History of APLA

In 2000, unofficial cooperation of parents of autistic children with specialists started to form. First it appeared in Praha and Brno and then it started to spread to other regions. The necessity to establish a national umbrella organization for these activities became inevitable. That is how APLA CR was established. Gradually it was evident that each region has other opportunities and priorities in the area of support of autistic people and that is why regional organizations were formed. These were established directly in regions as independent legal entities.

In 2003, APLA Praha was established in the Prague region. This organization underwent through a gradual process of professionalization, started to differentiate internally and grew. Currently, they are implementing activities in several centres within three main programs: 1. **Psychological and psychiatric services**; 2. **Social services** and 3. **Education and awareness a osveta**.

Since 2006, the Association Helping People with Autism – APLA Praha – offers also services in the area of supported employment. This services are provided within the social rehabilitation services.

Target Group and Its Specificity

Asperger Syndrome is an autism spectrum disorder. People with this syndrome show difficulties in communication and social behaviour, which are in contradiction with generally good intellect (in some cases intellect can be above average) and speaking skills (passive vocabulary is usually rich and the development of speech is not retarded). People with Asperger syndrome (AS) are usually able to get a secondary or university degree and so they are able to do appropriate jobs. However, they can have a problem to write a CV, to call a potential employer or to behave properly during an interview (for example they can ask inappropriate questions, they can fail in the ability to keep an eye contact or a personal zone). Problems are evident especially during the first contact with an employer, because people with AS feel insecure and they often behave in a very naive and inadequate way. Majority of employers are discouraged by such an inappropriate behaviour already during the first interview.

On the other hand, people with AS are usually happy to do routinuous, predictable work which is considered by other people to be boring. If they like a working process, they tend to be very effective and reliable. They often minimize their communication in a work place and focus on their work only. Usually they respect all instructions and regulations of employer. Thinking about ways how to involve these people into a working process, there are several ways that can be taken into consideration. Some of them are able to find and retain their work independently, others need a support in both of these areas. And exactly for those, there is the supported employment service.



Supported Employment

Supported employment (SE) is an important service provided within social rehabilitation services. Within SE, the support in search for work – in a way that is appropriate for specific needs of an individual client – is provided. Some clients need only a consultation focused on individual topics related to search for a job. After they find a job, they usually use an opportunity of so-called indirect assistance, within which they attend regular consultation aimed at specific issues a client can have in his work place. Other service users need a more intensive support in the whole process of supported employment including direct assistance in the work place. Participants can attend Job Clubs – group meetings focused on various topics related to a search for a job.

Similarly to ordinary people, also for users of supported employment services, it is necessary to find a job they like and they would be able to do with interest. In an ideal case, they can use their outstanding skills also in their job. Talking about these service users, it is not possible to generalize an assumption related to their degree. Some of them are able to be successful in fields like informatics, engineering, expert translation, others are able to work in a library or to help in a garden. Since the beginning of the service, APLA was able to find a job for nine service users. Some of them are working in a IT field, others are doing various support activities.



Other Activities within the Social Rehabilitation

Some service users use the opportunity of individual consultations related to a job search. These users usually need 2 – 3 consultations on specific topics, such as to get ready for an interview, to get some support for writing a motivation letter or a CV:

The Association Helping People with Autism offers within social rehabilitation services also group trainings of practical skills. These trainings are for clients older than 15 and are focused on skills inevitable for practical life. There are usually from four to six clients and two therapists in a group. Individual meetings consist of theoretical and practical training. Topics are for example traffic (planning the route, orientation in a time table, handling a crisis situations such a check of vouchers, use of an disability ID card, what to do when they are lost, etc.), orientation in time and space (work with a map, visit of an information centre), how to make a phone call training, how to fill in a form training (checks, requests, etc.), how to plan for leisure time. Topics are chosen based on wishes and needs of participants.

In addition to that, the organization offers PC courses for intermediary and advanced users. Participants learn how to work with individual programs of Microsoft Office package (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and other PC programmes. Trainers use special education programs. Obtained skills are important for their future success in the labour market and are also a condition for effective development of professional and leisure time activities.

(This experience was shared by Mgr. Eva Gnanová, the job consultant of the supported employment service at APLA Praha, Střední Čechy, o.s..)

Good Practice Example – View of All Involved Stakeholders

Employer of the Schachermayer Company

Mr. Jan approached the agency for supported employment in October 2007. After one year he started to cooperate with a job consultant and with her support to look for a job. They were able to find a job for Jan very quickly as the agency was at that time in a negotiation process with a Schachermayer company. The agency cooperated with this company already before – they were able to employ a disabled client some time ago.

Mr. Jan started to work there after two months in which he was able – with the support of the job consultant – to get all documentation necessary for the job. Mr. Jan works there as a shipping clerk, he is responsible for packing relevant items – he uses a computer, needs to know how to pack and how to use a wrapping machine. Thanks to assistance, he was able to do his job properly and he also became a respected member of the team. After the training, he decided to increase his working time from six to eight hours a day. This decision was made after discussions with his boss in the Schachermayer company, his carer but also the job consultant from the Rytmus agency. Currently (April 2009), Jan is absolutely independent and does not need the support of the agency for supported employment anymore.

Employer's Opinion:

What is your experience with employing disabled people?

„Our first experience was in a warehouse and it was not successful. This failure did not discourage us from the cooperation with the Rytmus company in the search for somebody else who would be disabled and could be employed in our company. Our second experience was very successful – in the cooperation with Rytmus, we were able to find Jan.“

Mr. Jan works with healthy people. Are they aware about his disability? Did it result in some negative reactions?

„Of course, our employees were informed about the fact that we would like to employ somebody disabled – we did it to prevent potential conflicts. Our employees are very good people – they have accepted Jan very well. Jan became quite popular in the team.“

Are you satisfied with the work Jan is doing?

„We are very satisfied with his work. He became a member of the Schachermayer logistic team very quickly and successfully. The fact that he was selected into a TOP team of the month in February says a lot about his qualities. In such a way our company awards the best employees in a month.“

Jan's Opinion:

What kind of support did Rytmus provide to you after you got the job?

„They provided support at the meeting in the company, during the interview, when

the contract was signed, at the discussions with the director and the head of the team, they helped me to learn how to work. It took from two weeks to one month. Then, I was alone there. Assistants of Rytmus were helping me, then I started to work alone – to work with PC, to pack.“

Does your employer organize some leisure time activities you can participate at? For example trip to mountains?

„I went to mountains in Austria with them. In summer, they organize sport games. In summer, I can go to a company’s cottage. We ride bikes.“

What are your duties in the company?

„There is a PC. I have to pack items – kitchen supplies, handles, screws, basins, drawers. I have to pack a pallet, learn how to pile items. There is a wrapping machine – everyone needs to know this. Then we wrap it and I need to take care of orders. If I send it somewhere else, they will send it back. It is a nice work. They are satisfied with me. I was awarded as the best packer twice. I got money for it. There is a satisfaction. The fact that my masters are satisfied is the most important. It is warm there. Sometimes it is difficult, but otherwise it can be handled. There was one guy and I taught him. He tried to do it and he liked it. If there is someone interested, I can recommend him this work.“

Carer’s Opinion:

In what way the cooperation between you and the job consultant was done?

„The job consultant was discussing with me and did all the steps with my agreement and my support. Contacts were made partially through personal meetings, but mainly through phone.“

Would you recommend a supported employment service to disabled people? If yes, why?

„I would definitely recommend this form and also this organization (Rytmus), but unfortunately I think their capacities are restricted. The reason for my recommendations are their good orientation considering needs of individual employer, awareness on local situation and above all their personal, active participation and help at the beginning of the work.“



Good Practice Examples from Great Britain

Courtesy of KMG Health Partners Ltd., Remploy, the Disability Standard, Dyfed Powys Police, and authors David Imber and Dr. Nick Niven-Jenkins. Special thanks belong to Gail Kovacs from KMG Health Partners, Ltd.

Individual Work with Clients

Job Retention

Mark

Mark is a 21 year old marketing manager trainee recently diagnosed with depression and experiencing ongoing problems as a result. He requires medication to help overcome depression symptoms and to function with daily activity. The side effects of his medication have affected his attendance and performance at work.

Mark's job requires him to work full time hours (40) with a shift work pattern. He is responsible for managing the team, checking stock displays in the store and helping with decisions on new season fashion for the store.

Mark's job performance prior to depression was good. Immediately following the onset his performance suffered dramatically to the point where he was at risk for losing his job. His employer was not happy with his performance and wanted to terminate him.

Mark contact Remploy's Job Retention Case Manager to assist with sustaining him in work. The case manager assisted in the following ways:

- Educated the employer on depression and the potential impact on work so he would appreciate what Mark was experiencing
- Advised the employer of his responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Suggested potential reasonable adjustments that would allow Mark to continue to work while he stabilised
- Took into consideration the fact that Mark's medication needed 6 to 8 weeks to take positive effect
- Suggested a stay in work plan that took into account Mark's fatigue and lack of concentration. The plan incorporated reduced hours with no early starts for first 3 weeks. It was reviewed weekly to ensure progress was taking place. For the next 5 weeks hours of work were gradually increased. Mark started rotating through his shifts again as well.
- Provided Mark and the employer with the support normally provided by Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programmes. The employer was a small one without access to these services.

After only 8 weeks, Mark was back on normal duties and hours and had successfully integrated back into the work force.

(Courtesy of Remploy)

Susan

Susan is a 48 year old Support Worker suffering from anxiety and depression thought to have been brought on by her inability to cope in her promoted role. Her performance prior to her promotion was good. In her promoted role she needed extensive improvement.

The union referred Susan to a Remploy Case Manager to identify what the real issues were related to her performance. She was missing time from work and was unable to complete all aspects of her job. As a Support Worker Susan managed a team and provided management reports. She was expected to work 37 hours per week. Human resources wanted to demote Susan to her previous position with a loss in pay.

The Case Manager determined during the initial assessment that performance problems arose immediately after Susan was promoted. When comparing the essential duties of the old and new jobs it was determined that the new job was more administrative in nature. Susan spent a large part of her day typing reports.

The Case Manager arranged a General Learning Disability Assessment with KMG Health Partners to determine if there might be underlying issues due to perhaps dyslexia. The assessment confirmed the existence of dyslexia, confirmed that the reports being generated by Susan should only take a short time to produce and recommended reasonable adjustments that the employer could implement to keep Susan in her promoted role.

Reasonable adjustments included:

- Dyslexia software
- Software training
- Susan's enrolment in an IT evening class to improve computer skills
- A return to work plan
- Susan dictating notes that were typed by a colleague.

The plan was reviewed weekly for one month. Susan remained in her promoted position with much improved performance levels. The employer too was pleased with the outcome.

(Courtesy of Remploy)

Tim

Remploy was contacted by the Director of a small business involved with selling and maintaining motorcycles. He was concerned about a member of his management team who was experiencing difficulties in the work place. The director mentioned confidently a situation with this gentleman's home life i.e. Drinking heavily after a family bereavement.

The Case Manager met with Tim who was not interested in the service and the support Remploy could offer.

The Case Manager decided to talk to Tim about case examples of other clients and how through support via therapies they had got to a better place in their lives. Tim was asked not to decide straight away, but to think about what had been discussed over the next few days. There was nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

After a few days the Case Manager received a phone call from Tim who asked if they could meet again. When they did the Case Manager discussed how they would set out this support mechanism for him.

The Case Manager set up a referral for Tim to a therapist for hypnosis and bereavement counselling. It was then agreed after certain information had been provided by the client on the first session by the therapist, that the counsellor would deliver support to both Tim and his wife in a joint session to support them with their difficulties.

After three sessions of therapy Tim was feeling more able to deal with things, and as a result changed career to that of a more supporting/guidance role, to that of what he had done previously which was a sales function.

He felt the experience he had gone through was very traumatic and the benefit of what he had undergone through therapy had made him want to provide a support function in his career. Tim decided to leave the motorcycle shop and has now gone to work for a support organisation that assists people with transport difficulties due to health issues.

The director of the motorcycle shop was very supportive with Tim's career direction.

(Courtesy of Remploy)

Reasonable adjustments

Serious Organised Crime Agency

On joining a new team within SOCA a number of adjustments were put in place for an officer who was registered blind.

This included the following software:

- JAWS (in conjunction with speakers and headphones), and in conjunction with a Braille display).
- Open Book (in conjunction with a document scanner), to enable the officer to convert printed material into electronic documents that can be read by JAWS in a word processor.
- Software to magnify the text on the screen, to enable the officer to make use of their remaining residual vision.

The officer has also been provided with a full time PA. This PA is shared between the blind officer and one other member of the team, on the understanding that the officer's work takes priority in the event of a conflict. The PA also fills any down-time by acting as office manager and undertaking a range of administrative functions for the team as a whole.

As well as this the officer also has access to a designated outdoor area, which was free from pedestrian or vehicular traffic, was quiet and clean, for the officer's guide dog to relieve itself. The officer also has a separate office which is big enough to enable the guide dog to walk freely, rather than being confined in a single spot, and to provide room for it to lie down in a corner.

SOCA is flexible about hours of work to enable the officer to avoid the worst excesses of rush hour travel; paying for reasonable taxi use when travelling on official business or to/from work in exceptional circumstances e.g. where public transport is seriously disrupted. As a result of the reasonable adjustments provided, the officer performs his role effectively as an equal member of his team.

(Courtesy of the Disability Standard)

Leicestershire Constabulary

A newly diagnosed insulin dependent diabetic police officer was referred to the Occupational Health Unit by their HR Officer. During the consultation all aspects of the condition that may have impacted on their police officer work was discussed. The discussion included practical considerations such as storage of their insulin at the correct temperature, while at work. As a result of the consultation a fridge was supplied by the force to enable the insulin to be stored appropriately.

Other reasonable adjustments were made to the role including an agreed reduction in working hours for a period of time until the officer's insulin dosage had been adjusted appropriately to allow for a reduction in symptoms.

Consideration was given to ensure that the officer received support but was not treated differently where appropriate. An example of this was in relation to overtime. Once the officer was well enough to undertake full hours, a specific area of the risk assessment covered the issue of overtime. A control measure was that the officer could be offered unscheduled overtime, but there should be no expectation that this would be worked, i.e. they were to be given the same opportunities as their colleagues but it remained the officer's choice whether to work the overtime, dependant on their health at the time of the request.

The officer was provided with specialist dietetic advice funded via the force, to enable them to understand the correlation between various food groups and blood sugar levels, thereby assisting their overall control. Finally they were given disability leave to attend two diabetic courses.

(Courtesy of Disability Standard)

Derbyshire Constabulary

Lisa, who has epilepsy, was successfully recruited to the Criminal Justice Department. As well as epilepsy she had difficulty walking and severely restricted movement in one of her hands, the result of a stroke shortly after birth. It was clear that a number of adjustments would be needed in order to assist Lisa in her role.

Due to the limited use of her hand and her restricted mobility, the filing of large files needed to be discounted from Lisa's daily tasks. Lisa was encouraged to carry out some of the filing, but only of those files that she was comfortable with. The use of steps was not suitable and this ruled out any filing at the upper level. A 'hands free' answering kit was also obtained as telephony was an important aspect of her job.

In addition Lisa informed the department that a physiotherapist from the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary could visit the workplace and advise on any further adjustments. This was duly arranged and led to a higher wrist rest being obtained in order to avoid possible strain.

Staff was also instructed on what to do should an epileptic seizure occur while Lisa was at work. A person trained in first aid demonstrated the necessary action to be taken by all staff. Guidance was also provided by email and included in pamphlets which were given out to staff.

A flexi-time policy is operated within Derbyshire Constabulary covering the hours of 8am to 6pm. Although sometimes inconvenient, care was taken to ensure that Lisa did not work on her own.

Evacuation drills have also been taken into consideration. Staff were informed of the importance in ensuring Lisa was escorted down the stairs and safely out of the building. In these instances Lisa was accompanied by two members of staff in case of a seizure for someone to be able to stay with her while the other person went for assistance.

The adjustments that were made helped Lisa to be able to perform the majority of the duties within her role and they also helped demonstrate the importance and value of teamwork within the work environment.

(Courtesy of Disability Standard)

Good Practice Examples - Agencies

Bedfordshire County Council

The Supported Apprenticeship Project of Bedfordshire County Council is working with Adults with Learning Disabilities and has developed a package of employer and client support. All clients are supported by a job coach when they start work. During the time the client is being coached, the employment support co-ordinator has the opportunity to identify natural supports within the workplace and further develop working relationships with the employer and employees within the company. Co-workers have the opportunity to observe and copy the job coach/client relationship. The duration of job coach support is determined by the needs of the client and the complexity of their job. The withdrawal of job coaching support is done in agreement with the employee and employer; perhaps on a phased basis. Feedback from both employer and client is sought regularly through formal monitoring and review meetings, informal drop-in meetings and phone calls. Employers are provided with mobile phone numbers for support workers if they feel they need additional support.

Through the monitoring and review process further training needs can often be identified. Employers may have in-house training that clients can take advantage of, or the project may look at college training that meets the need. Any shortfalls in performance can be identified and a further period of job coaching put in if necessary. The project also asks for feedback on 'soft outcomes'.

(Courtesy of European Social Fund: Good practice in helping disabled people back to work by David Imber and Dr. Nick Niven-Jenkins)



BT and Remploy partner for Enable service

Remploy has signed a partnership agreement with BT to deliver an impartial support service for any of its employees who have a disability or health condition. The contract operates across all of BT's UK lines of business, encompassing more than 90,000 people.

Enable is BT's specialist vocational rehabilitation service through which individual employees and managers can access expert advice and support on disability or health related employment issues, allowing them to be their best at work.

Remploy - the UK's leading provider of specialist employment services for people who experience complex barriers to work - offers a comprehensive package focused on the individual and their specific requirements. Line managers can refer employees who are experiencing difficulties at work but - in a unique move - Enable also allows individuals to self-refer and access advice independently.

BT employees accessing the service will work with one of Remploy's vocational rehabilitation consultants who will identify any workplace adjustments required and help to implement them and provide impartial advice on disability related issues.

Adjustments can include changing an individual's working hours, offering additional training or job coaching, providing specialist equipment such as adjustable chairs and desks, making alterations to premises or, in a few cases, assisting an employee in moving to an alternative internal role.

Signing the agreement, BT's Director of People and Policy, Caroline Waters said: "I am delighted to welcome Remploy as our Enable partner. BT's vision on disability and inclusion is to anticipate and accommodate the needs of all our people. Enable allows us to do this as well as retain skilled and talented employees. We believe this gives us the commercial edge in a highly competitive market all the more crucial in the current economic climate."

Over the past five years, more than 300 disabled people have been supported into or retained in roles within BT's customer contact centres and a ground-breaking agreement allows Remploy to operate as a central broking agency to BT, working with 31 other job providers around the UK to maximise employment opportunities for people with disabilities and health conditions.

Beth Carruthers, Remploy's Director of Employment Services, said: "This partnership is the latest milestone in Remploy's successful history of partnering with BT. We have already supported a great number of people into work and now through Enable, we can help even more people with health conditions or disabilities to remain in work and to develop their careers."

(Courtesy of Remploy's website)

Dyfed Powys Police, Remploy and KMG Health Partners

Dyfed Powys Police's Human Resources and Occupational Health department have worked very closely with Remploy and KMG Health Partners over recent years to assist rehabilitation at work, particularly when staff members have had complex medical conditions, or barriers to work. An independent service to provide additional support has been very beneficial in a number of cases where progress has been limited and specific expertise is required. This type of intervention has, and continues to have a beneficial effect in facilitating an earlier return to work or preventing sickness absence occurring.

Empower is a new collaborative project led by Dyfed Powys Police with the aim to facilitate a cultural change amongst management and staff to one that considers return to substantive post as achievable and realistic. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- To move individuals currently on restricted duty back to their regular job
- Reduce the overall time an individual returning to work stays on restricted duty
- Increase the number of cases where individuals return directly to their regular job.
- Demonstrate that individuals do not need to be functioning at 100% in order to do their regular job
- Build the confidence of managers to consider alternatives to restricted duties.

As a project, Empower includes the following components:

- Completion of a survey to inform training and support services
- One day training programme for all front line managers
- Practice Development in the form of assessment and case management support on specific cases. Remploy case managers will mentor Dyfed Powys Police front line managers while they build knowledge and skill.
- Re-surveying to determine the extent of learning and skill development
- Project evaluation.

Empower is a new and innovative idea that is being embraced by all parties. We are in early stages but hope to have successes to share by the end of 2009.

(Courtesy of Dyfed Powys Police, Remploy and KMG Health Partners Ltd)



Conclusion:

In this publication, we seek to collect and present some good practice examples in the area of employment of people with disabilities on labour markets in three countries. Our goal is to generalize some good experience, to define it and to pass it to others. Here are some of our findings:

- Individual support and accompanying of severely handicapped person on his way toward a job is a good decision
- We respect the job choice of our clients
- We support citizens who want to work
- We try to find and retain paid jobs for our clients
- We are listening to opinions of parents and colleagues of our clients
- The diagnosis of our client is not important, for job integration it is important what he/she can do
- Qualification raising and carrier development is relevant also for disabled citizens
- Transition programmes help us to keep a special school graduate in activity also after he/she leaves the school
- We support connections among employment services, housing services, and leisure time activities
- We prefer positioning of disabled people in regular open labour market
- Regular life and work conditions are crucial for the development of skills and abilities, and also for the integration of our clients
- We enforce activating and motivating philosophy of help for those employers who are providing jobs, not sanctions for those who are not
- Many employed people with disabilities need constant help and supervision during their work life; this is why we welcome development and inter-connection of social and employment services

APZ n. o. , Bratislava, 2009

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