

NEGOTIATING WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS (POSITIVE FUTURES3)

Placements were arranged by Positive Futures in the voluntary, public and private sectors. The process for all placements was the same and worked on the assumption that the placement provider knew nothing about HIV and people who have the condition or about work experience placements and their benefits. Therefore, early on it was realised that time had to be invested in each placement if it was going to be a success. This investment of time was necessary to explore all of the *elements and tools* that could build a productive placement and to develop constructive working relationships with all of the parties involved, which was crucial to the ongoing success of the scheme. The tools that were used included:

- *An Employers' Guide* with a strong emphasis upon the value to the employer – an unpaid resource that brought added benefit to the placement provider. It offered a structure that could be easily understood and took the provider through all the stages in the process from the initial meeting with Positive Futures to how the placement would be monitored and evaluated;
- *The CV* setting out skills, experience and qualifications that introduced an individual to the would-be placement provider;
- *A Job Description* that provided not only a focus but also a purpose to the placement. It allowed the individual to identify what he or she would get from undertaking the placement and how it matched his or her own needs and aspirations. The added value to the placement provider of producing a job description was that it provided a method of identifying labour shortages within the organisation that, in turn, might be met on a long-term basis by the person who was benefiting from the work experience;
- *An appraisal form* that was used at the midpoint of the placement to ensure that the original purpose of the placement was being met and enabled both the person in the placement and placement provider to review the progress that had been made and establish the objectives for remainder of the placement.

The essential elements in the placement included:

- *Monitoring of the Placement* that was active and sustained particularly at the 'settling in' stages;
- *Carrying out a Health and Safety Check* on the premises and working conditions of the placement provider that allowed Positive Futures to promise its clients a safe working environment within current legislative guidelines. This check also had the added benefits to the employer of highlighting any lapses in Health and Safety and of providing advice on good practice;
- *Addressing Confidentiality* that proved to be a useful way to start to identify any training needs around HIV, as well as determining who should be aware of the medical status of the individual who was on placement.

Contact

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