

Christina signs-up for job success

Christina Allen, from Wolverhampton, had been out of work for some time when she heard about an employment course being ran for deaf people, entirely in British Sign Language (BSL), by Zebra Access

The 43-year-old had been applying for jobs but found she was not being successful either in the application stage or in interviews. She realised that it was her CV that was letting her down, and she felt that in order to boost her job prospects, she needed to refresh it to avoid further knocks to her confidence.

Christina had previously attended workshops ran by Zebra and they got in contact about an employment course. Eager to boost her chances of finding a job, she signed up.

Zebra Access, who received a community grant worth nearly £12,000 from the West Midlands Leaders Board's and Skills Funding Agency's regional European Social Fund programme, ran the course over a 12-week period and assisted 10 deaf learners with improving their CVs, brushing up on their interview skills and filling out application forms. The course also helped them to understand their disability rights and apply for benefits.

Speaking about the course, Christina said: "After being out of work for some time, I found the course really useful. Not only has it given my self-esteem a boost, I am now armed with a good CV and I feel like I can go into interviews with confidence.

"The course has enabled me to meet people who have been experiencing the same problems as me, and I feel like I have been given a new lease of life. I now feel ready to start applying for my dream job as a mental health worker, as the course has inspired me, and I want to be successful in my future career."

Marilyn Bueno del Carpio, director at Zebra, said: “Christina’s belief in herself has really grown since she started the course, and she can now apply for jobs and attend interviews with confidence.

“Many of our learners don’t feel like they have the right support from mainstream training courses or job centres, which is why Zebra is determined to provide them with the right support and guidance to help them in the quest for employment.”

ENDS

For more information about the region’s ESF co-financing programme, please call Bailey Lamburn, Laura Reid or Michaela Maryon on 0121 456 3199 or email esfpr@smarts.co.uk.

Notes to editors

European Social Fund 2007 – 13

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

The ESF programme forms part of the wider European Structural Funds programme running from 2007 to 2013, through which the UK will receive an anticipated £8bn of European funding.

In the West Midlands, the Skills Funding Agency, West Midlands Leaders Board and Jobcentre Plus are working with partners to deliver a wide range of projects designed to promote regional employment and skills objectives.

The Skills Funding Agency and West Midlands Leaders Board have over £200m to invest in:

- Improving the employability of inactive and unemployed people
- Tackling the barriers faced by young people not in education, employment or training
- Assisting offenders into work, education or training
- Providing small grants to the third sector to support the aims of ESF
- Supporting people experiencing redundancy to retrain and find new jobs
- Raising the qualifications and skills of workers to improve their job prospects and productivity

Government Office West Midlands

go-wm.gov.uk/gowm/EuroFund/StructuralFunds2007-2013/?a=42496

Jobcentre Plus

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/european-social-fund/>

Skills Funding Agency

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>
West Midlands Leaders Board
<http://www.wmleadersboard.gov.uk/esf>