

# 50 Forward Lancaster

LinkAge Plus

## Employment/ Volunteering Bureau

A new project aimed at older adults to recognise, support and unlock the potential of older people and promote independence and choice. This is a new Employment Agency for older people delivered by Age Concern Lancashire.

The agency offers options that enable individuals to make their own choices matching their abilities, skills, strengths and experiences to the vacancies available. We understand the benefits the older employee offers businesses including maturity, experience, life skills and values. The volunteer bureau offers support in all aspects of volunteering.

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# Employment/Volunteering Bureau

## Objective

- Offer the full support of an employment agency, who understand the needs and wants of mature people.
- Hold a database of volunteer services and sign-post individuals to volunteering options matching their abilities, skills and strengths.
- Support the needs of the individual.
- Enable older people to remain fit and active within their communities.
- Enhance community cohesion.
- Establish Time Bank volunteering groups in the community.

## Activity

Creation of a new Employment Agency for older people, delivered by Age Concern offering specific employment support to older people. Our consultants support individuals on a 1-2-1 basis to help them achieve their goals. They give advice and support including:

- help in finding a new job;
- access to training and new skills;
- volunteering opportunities;
- access to advice on welfare benefits;
- navigating to other services offering support, including self-employment.

In addition they work with employers to improve prospects for older people.

## Achievements against objectives

- From January 2007 to January 2008 the employment agency has helped 66 people into paid employment.
- A successful partnership has been established with 67 local employers supporting the agency.
- From April 2007 the volunteer agency has placed 126 of the 164 people registered with organisations.

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## Wider achievements

- The Volunteer Bureau and Employment Agency have worked in conjunction with each other. There have been a number of placed volunteers that have been offered paid employment in the same organisation.
- Promote well-being and independence, the services are preventative in approach and go beyond health and social care.
- Provide flexible pro-active services to reflect the diversity of older people, their needs and aspirations, different environments and anticipate changing requirements.
- Provided accessible services, in that projects are easily accessible in terms of location, opening times, etc.
- Provided a respectful service to its customers and avoids duplication wherever possible.

## Resources

We have one employment consultant, one volunteer coordinator, two part-time admin staff, one Project Manager, and just very recently employed a Project support officer across both projects.

## Key lesson learned

The volunteering placements have been effective because we started by identifying what people wanted to do, and sourced opportunities, rather than starting with a menu of opportunities and asking people to choose from them. The employment service identified an unmet need, and showed that some people need a different approach to help them find employment opportunities.

*Quote: 'Today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals who possess the skills, desire, patience and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks'.*

## Further information

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[http://www.lancaster4u.co.uk/company.php?company\\_id=234](http://www.lancaster4u.co.uk/company.php?company_id=234)

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## Related documents

See website above.