

# Engage Partnership Employment League

**EACH month, the Engage Partnership Employment League will highlight those businesses which demonstrate their commitment to diversity by employing local marginalised people. For more information on employing diverse people, contact [claire.mitchell@engagesolutions.org.uk](mailto:claire.mitchell@engagesolutions.org.uk).**



One job outcome per company other than those indicated ( )

## Engage organisation: Working Links

A24 Site, Anglian Home Improvements, Aossa Travel, Asda (2), Black Lion Harvester (2), Brighton Marquees, Carlton House Care Home, Cavalaire Hotel, Central Hove Surgery, Clarkes Stationers, Co-op, Hays Construction and Property, Infinity Foods Café, K&M Developments, LSI, Michael Medway lighting & Sound, Momentum, Mr Gleam Ltd, Natterjack.

Press, Next, Paces, Personnel Selection, Peter Overhill Associates, Plan Personnel, Revitalise, Rullion, Same Sky, Satellite Direct, Scolarest/Compass Group, Shane Webb Leaflet Distributors, South East Dance, St Anne's Care Home, Telegen UK Ltd, The Arc Bar, The Bridge Café, Traid Remade, Working Links, Wyevale Garden Centre.

## Engage organisation: Careers Development Group

Duke of Beaufort (2), Hilton, Peacocks, Pee-Wee hair salon, Pizza Hut, Powderrooms, Sharpe and Clarke Accountants, Telegen, Young Sussex.

**APART from its customers, a company's staff are the most important part of any business and it is vital this workforce reflects its customer base. Every month, in association with Brighton and Hove LEADER (Local Employers Acting on Diversity and Race), The Argus will feature news on employment law, training, opportunities and other developments, to provide up-to-date information for employers and potential staff on diversity and other hot topics in a language everyone can understand.**



Fiona Martin, of Martin Searle Solicitors, a member of the Brighton and Hove LEADER steering group



# Joint effort to fill in job vacancies

PICTURE: SAM STEPHENSON

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by SAM THOMSON

**One of my employees is returning to work after a long absence having been diagnosed with a severe back problem. What do I need to do?**

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments if an employee is likely to be protected by the Disability Discrimination Act. This is where a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (likely to be more than one year) adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

We suggest meeting your employee prior to their return to discuss adjustments that would help. For example, a back-supporting chair, frequent rest breaks, part-time work or a graduated return.

**Where can I get more advice and assistance about reasonable adjustments?**

The Department for Work and Pensions has a website with guidance on what would be considered a reasonable adjustment according to the type and size of the employer and cost of the adjustment.

The Access to Work scheme might pay towards equipment required at work or adapting premises to meet a disabled worker's needs. It can also pay towards the cost of getting to work if a disabled person cannot use public transport.

For further help, your local Jobcentre Plus which will put you in touch with one of its disability employment advisors. See also [www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/employmentsupport](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/employmentsupport).

**What if the adjustments required are so extensive and expensive they will have an adverse effect on my business?**

The Disability Discrimination Act only requires employers to make "reasonable" adjustments. However, it is important to give considerable thought to what could be done to help. Be sure to request a medical report outlining the prognosis for the person's circumstances and a view on reasonable adjustments. This can come from a GP or an independent medical adviser. Remember also to consider alternative employment more suited to the health constraints.

Dismissal should always be the very last resort. It is essential to consult with the employee concerned before deciding to dismiss them on the grounds of ill health or capability. If you have a Permanent Health Insurance Scheme (PHI) for employees you will need specialist employment law advice.



DEAL: City chief executive Alan McCarthy and Claire Mitchell from Engage sign up

MANY more people who are long-term unemployed should be able to find a fulfilling job thanks to a new collaboration between government and businesses.

Brighton and Hove City Council has become the first local authority in the South East to sign a Local Employment Partnership (LEP), a formal commitment to employ local people who may find themselves marginalised from the workforce.

It will see the authority team up with Jobcentre Plus to develop opportunities for people struggling to find work and those on incapacity benefit.

Training will be on offer to the city's long-term unemployed to help them with interview skills, filling out application forms and preparing for employment.

Those taking part will also be given one-to-one support and the chance to undertake work shadowing of a particular job they are interested in.

The first phase of the LEP programme is open to anyone over 18 years old who has been unemployed for more than six months plus lone parents and individuals with disabilities or mental health issues.

### Disadvantaged

The council's long-term aim is to include any under-represented groups, such as school and college leavers; young people not in education, employment, or training (Neets); those over 50 years old; black and minority ethnic jobseekers; ex-substance abusers; ex-offenders and former homeless people.

There are already two people working in adult social care as a result of the programme and the council is hoping other employers in the city will sign an LEP as well.

Chief executive Alan McCarthy said: "We still have large parts of the city which are disadvantaged and, as the biggest employer in the city, it is vital we engage with the people who live there."

"It is really important for a council to reflect the area in which it operates and one of the ways we can do that is through our workforce."

The council contracted a team from Engage Employment Solutions, specialists in promoting diversity in the workforce, to design the LEP programme and make sure it is adopted across all departments.

Engage director Claire Mitchell said: "It is fantastic to see the council developing good practices to share with other public sector organisations."

Shaun Rafferty, head of HR at the council, said the LEP was not a way to fill the lowest paid jobs in the council.

He said: "We have been really broad about what type of vacancies we are offering. Any job below £27,000 will be included so we are not just talking about low paid jobs."