

Progress in Practice

Actions for Community Employment (ACE) – Barts and The London NHS Trust

As part of the Trust's approach to good corporate citizenship, the ACE project provides increased employment opportunities for local residents, generating a more representative workforce across the Trust's three teaching hospitals and contributing to sustainable regeneration in one of the most disadvantaged areas of Britain.

Summary

Employee diversity and training opportunities for local people are key to sustainable employment practice in the NHS. Barts and the London NHS Trust has provided structured training and employment opportunities for local people, resulting in a lower staff turnover and a more culturally diverse service.

The project was launched in February 2005 with the primary aim of contributing to the sustainable regeneration of the local area, especially around The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel. It identified patterns of high unemployment amongst the local Bangladeshi population – about 1 in 5 were not in employment. At the same time, there was a high turnover among the Trust's workforce. In many grades, 1 in 3 of hospital staff moved or vacated their posts – a trend that was unsustainable. A project to tackle both of these problems was drawn up.

As a pilot of the NHS Good Corporate Citizenship Assessment Model, Barts and The London has pioneered sustainable practice in the health service through its approach to employment, buildings and procurement.

“The programme is doing a vital job in drawing potential candidates from all sections of the local community.”

**Maureen Finneran – Haematology Department,
Barts and The London NHS Trust**



The ACE Project

Barts and the London NHS Trust identified 300 entry-level vacancies that could be filled by the local community. These jobs were publicised through local advertising campaigns.

Unsuccessful applicants also benefited from the project through work placements. Organised in conjunction with Work Wise – a separate project to help local people gain experience of working within the NHS – work placements were offered to enhance skills and provide people with valuable additional training. The majority of applicants went on to secure full-time employment after completing their placements.

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Good corporate citizenship benefits:

The 'ACE' project has contributed to the local community, economy and environment in a number of ways by:

- reducing the 'travel miles' of its workforce.
- lowering costs by eliminating shortlisting processes and decreasing its reliance on agency staff.
- lessening staff turnover.
- increasing the skill base of the local population, contributing to the economic sustainability of the area.
- improving the health of the community by reducing unemployment.
- creating a service more attuned to the cultural diversity of the local community, leading to a better take-up of services and improved community health.

Strategic Learning Points:

The project provides a blueprint for sustainable practice in NHS recruitment practices by stressing the importance of:

- targeted, local job advertising;
- developing direct liaison between managers, recruiters and candidates;
- fostering partnership with local job providers;
- establishing arrangements with employment agencies like Job Centre Plus;
- engaging a variety of public and private stakeholders in the process;
- taking a whole-organisation approach to introducing sustainable practices within the health sector.

"The project has been great. I've worked here for three months now and I'm really enjoying it. I can walk to the Royal London Hospital in 20 minutes and it is nice to work in the area that you live in."

Brian Patterson – ACE recruit



ACE outcomes:

Since February 2005:

- 300 jobs have been filled.
- 80% of vacancies have been filled by 'ACE' candidates.
- 69% of posts have been filled by ethnic minorities, of which 38% were from the Bangladeshi community.
- 26 Work Wise placements have been filled, of which 65% of candidates went on to secure full time employment.
- customer satisfaction with the project is 95%.

Links and organisations involved: Barts and the London NHS Trust (www.bartsandthelondon.org.uk); Employment Solutions (www.tower.ac.uk/employmentsolutions/default.asp); Job Centre Plus (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk); Work Wise (www.workwiseuk.org); Skanska Innisfree John Laing (www.skanska.co.uk); City Fringe Partnership (www.cityfringe.co.uk); London Development Agency (www.lda.gov.uk); Thames Gateway London Partnership (www.thames-gateway.org.uk); Tower Hamlets College (www.tower.ac.uk); London Borough of Tower Hamlets (www.towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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