



## case study

## equal opportunities



Objective One is part-financed by the European Union



The Objective One Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

### **PENTREATH LTD** (Formerly Pentreath Industries)

Contact: Louise Knox  
20 Higher Bugle  
St Austell  
Cornwall PL26 8PY  
Telephone: 01726 850565  
Fax: 01726 851452  
email: pentreath@pentreath.co.uk

### **the project**

This project offers work experience, training and employment to people in Cornwall recovering from mental ill health and aims to get 800 people back to work.

Pentreath is a registered charity established in 1990. It now operates from eleven sites throughout Cornwall with 58 members of staff providing services for over 1000 trainees per annum.

The Programme has invested £998,854 from the European Social Fund (ESF) in the project which has a total cost of £1,840,545.



*Heaven Scent training nursery in the grounds of Bodmin Hospital*

### **measures of equal opportunities adopted**

Although mental ill health affects one in four of the population and about 1% have a severe and enduring condition, there are still many negative assumptions about the competence and character of people affected.

Pentreath target people with or recovering from severe and enduring mental ill health and people referred by New Deal personal advisors as requiring social support. Pentreath also provides specific women only support where needed.

Giving people the opportunity to work makes an enormous contribution to rebuilding self esteem and ambition in people. In addition to bringing more people back into the labour market it also ensures that their skills are not lost from the economy.

Equal opportunities is also a theme embedded in every aspect of the work at Pentreath. All vacancies for staff are open to all with trainees made aware of the vacancies and encouraged to apply. A number of the present staff have been trainees at Pentreath. All staff undertake both equal opportunities and diversity awareness training to ensure that the needs of black and minority ethnic trainees and those from Traveller or migrant worker communities are better understood. Staff and trainees are made aware of the grievance

policy and procedures. Working hours can be flexible with part time and increasing hours systems in place for those with caring responsibilities or those adjusting to a working environment. Awareness of the equal opportunities policy is included as part of the trainee's induction. Inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour or language is not tolerated from either staff or trainees. Adjustments are made for people with mobility difficulties, for example a training area has been provided with a tea point because it would be difficult for one trainee to get to the canteen.

### **benefits of equal opportunities**

It is felt that Pentreath can only operate successfully if all staff and trainees are treated fairly and the needs of individuals are understood.

The economic benefits of this project are that in 2004 the average length of time that the 870 trainees had been out of work was 11 years. Of that 870, 70 moved into full time employment, 260 went on to full time further education and a further 237 individual work placements were arranged. Helping people to regain their self esteem and learn new skills enables them to make a sustainable contribution to the economy and reduces the need for benefit.

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#### lessons learnt

Louise Knox, chief executive, said *“The training we provide gives people skills, qualifications and confidence and helps to put them on a level playing field in the employment market.”*

*“We are taking forward this philosophy with our own staff. We have not been good at caring for ourselves and we often support colleagues with difficulties rather than tackling the issues. We need to be more proactive in implementing our policies with practical advice.”*

Pentreath is currently rewriting its equal opportunities policy and incorporating more monitoring procedures.

#### Awards

Pentreath has won many awards for Social Inclusion, Lifelong Learning and health and social care from the Department of Health and also an award from the British Print Industries Federation.

In 2002 Pentreath won an Adult Learners Week Group Award for the best ESF project, in recognition of the wildlife conservation work they have done on the Camel Trail at Wadebridge.

**For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email [objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk).**



Heaven Scent vegetable patch