



case study

equal opportunities



Objective One is
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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

TRURONIAN TRAINING

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the project

This project was co-financed through Jobcentre Plus and the Truronian bus company providing both Public Service Vehicle (PSV) and Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) training to local unemployed people. It was aimed specifically at people ineligible for traditional Work Based Learning for Adults and New Deal Training Programmes.

The Programme has invested £97,000 from the European Social Fund (ESF) in two phases of the project.

The project, covering both Public Service Vehicle (PSV) and Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) training, was designed to train people for employment and everyone entering the programme had to have the offer of employment from a prospective employer.

The project specifically targeted people aged over 50, under 21s and women who were not in employment either because they were early retired, claiming incapacity benefit or simply not working. The beneficiaries were also not eligible for other sources of training. The first two phases of the project supported 65 clients, and 24 small businesses within the public transport and logistic sectors. 80% of beneficiaries went on to employment, the remainder being people who for a variety of health reasons were unable to be granted a licence by the DVLA. 10 trainees had a permanent work disability, 7 were claiming incapacity benefit, 16 were over the age of 50 and 6 of the trainees were female.

measures of equal opportunities adopted

Truronian has always had a policy of training and employing people who are out of work for whatever reason. This project has enabled the company to offer that opportunity to many more people. Many of the trainees are aged over 50; they may have been made redundant, taken early retirement or become unable to



Single parent Linda McErlain is fulfilling her ambition to be a bus driver through Jobcentre Plus's Truronian Training Scheme

do their previous work. Many suffer low esteem and self confidence. The training seeks to overcome the barriers by tailoring the training to the individual needs.

Lis Cox, Training Manager at Truronian said: *"Over the years, it had become apparent that there were unemployed people wishing to return to work who were not eligible for recognised training schemes and this project bridges that gap. The training is particularly aimed at the younger and older person, lone parents and women. The attraction of the programme is its flexibility. Beneficiaries can train and work the hours that suit them and it has proved to be very successful. Over 50 beneficiaries have been employed within both industries as a result of our training."*

One trainee had become an amputee as the result of an accident at his previous employment and Truronian was able to help him to retrain as a taxi driver. One of the female trainees had become partially deaf as the result of physical domestic abuse. The training was adapted to meet her needs. Lis said that it was amazing how quickly the rest of the workforce adapted: *"They know she can't hear in the yard so it's no good calling out to her to warn her of hazards. Someone will go and make sure she is aware."* She went on to say that whilst company policy is not to discriminate against anyone with a disability it is sometimes out of their hands. There are limitations set by the DVLA which preclude some people from obtaining a licence.



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At a recruitment open day, Lis was approached by a man who had recently been made redundant and was fully expecting to be told that at 58 he was too old to train to get his Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) licence. He had little self confidence and was very anxious that he would not succeed. With support and encouragement he successfully completed his training and proved to be such a worthwhile employee that he was immediately put onto a premiere route and has been nominated for the National Trainee of the Year Award. Lis said: *"It is great to see the change in him. He is always so cheerful now."*

Lis explained that it is difficult to work traditional 'part time' hours but the company does try to be flexible. One young woman works a normal shift but takes a break late in the afternoon to pick up her son from school.

Adaptations are made whenever possible to help people complete their training even if that means changes have to be made to the training vehicle for example, changing the seat so that shorter people are able to reach the pedals.

As part of the training all beneficiaries and staff undertake equal opportunities awareness training which includes Disability Awareness covering not only visible impairments but also hidden disabilities. The company has a robust Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy which is reviewed, monitored and updated regularly.

benefits of equal opportunities

Lis Cox said that by implementing good equal opportunities and diversity practices the company gets a diverse workforce which not only reflects the population of Cornwall but also recognises the challenges and difficulties people may face. She went on to say how vitally important it is to attract young people into the public transport and logistics industries as there is a skills gap that needed filling. Through professional training and recognised qualifications, Truronian Training is able to ensure that companies have professional and safe drivers.

For the individuals Lis said that she hopes the scheme gives them the chances that they may not have had elsewhere. On a personal note she said: *"I delight in seeing people achieve. All we are doing is opening the door - the people achieve."*

lessons learnt

Lis said: *"It would be nice to be able to offer people a small amount of money to help pay for the medi-*

cal required to get their Provisional Licence. We can't and that means that some people start the course, are precluded from getting a licence and have to leave. It would be so good to be able to offer the training to people who knew that they would be able to get a licence. We would also like to be able to do a pre assessment of their driving skills. Again we might be able to take on others." She went on to say that bus driving is still regarded as 'only a job' but in fact it is a profession that needs to be recognised. It is the pooling of many skills and abilities from customer service requiring tact and diplomacy to decision making as well as a high level of driving skills.

awards

The **Positive About Disabled People Symbol** was awarded to Truronian by the Employment Service in 1995 as an acknowledgement of their good practices and policies towards the employment of people with disabilities.

Public Transport Operator of the Year 2003

Truronian won this prestigious National Transport Award against tough nationwide competition. It is the culmination of many years of innovative projects aimed at always achieving a high standard of quality and service for the travelling public of Cornwall.

Truronian Training also offers **The Young Drivers Scheme**, which enables 18 to 20 year olds to obtain their LGV licence and also achieve an NVQ.

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.