

**MINUTES OF CARE LEAVERS FOCUS GROUP MEETING**  
**Held on 10 June 2004**



Venue: Europa House, Bury

**1. KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

**How do you find the PA's at Extra Mile? What do you expect from them? Do you feel you are benefiting from their input?**

- The PA's are helpful.
- Good on general issues.
- Always accessible.
- Give good advice, explain well.
- Make allowances, are understanding.
- Someone to turn to.
- Somebody behind you all the way.
- Able to talk in confidence – trust.
- Would like more one to ones.
- Has been confusing switching PA's over the years.

**2. What type of support/help would you need from Bury EST to find a job? Do you feel you could benefit from their input and what stops you from accessing it?**

- Client has to be 100% committed - if not, you might as well close the case.
- Work can be daunting/frightening (application forms/interviews) – biggest issue is confidence.
- The people who have worked with Bury EST mentioned how Bury EST focuses on selling the good points of the client whilst managing to motivate and support the client.
- Care Leavers have had too many people involved in their lives already and they can find it confusing.
- It was felt that interview practise/role play would help.
- It is good to know that either Fran or Phil would act as negotiators between client and employer.
- It would be really helpful to have help with CV's, job seeking and interviews.
- It is really helpful to know the service is available.

**ACTION**

**3. How do you find the job centre?**

- The job centre is a joke shop.
- The staff show lack of respect, look down on young care leavers.
- Care leavers end up queuing up for 45 minutes only to be told the job is for over 18's only. It should be clear if the job is for over 18's only.
- Staff can't be bothered with them, assume on drugs – have made comments.
- Most felt it was a degrading, negative response at the job centre.
- Would prefer to have a Job Assistant! To aid people with their job search.
- People felt there is no help/support available at the job centre.
- Suggested action – identify contact with job centre.

**4. Have you tried Connexions?**

- Mixed reviews on Connexions and Rathbones.
- E2E training courses don't come up to expectations – should keep their promises regarding certificates and the relevance of the certificates.
- £50 per week incentive on these courses.
- 1 person joined E2E to become a painter/decorator and left the course because he never actually got to even hold a paint brush.
- 2 out of 4 said there was loads of paperwork, no assistance. Work wise it was rubbish.
- The careers advice is good.
- Care leavers felt they have had many false promises.
- They are helpful with training courses.

**5. Employment/work experience – good/bad?****How could it work better?**

- Generally it is a good idea – money incentive would help motivation.
- Would like to shadow an experienced co-worker.
- Childcare is an issue – no tax credits to pay for nursery care.
- Could be beneficial to many people, saves re-organising benefits if you find out you don't like the job.
- There are not a lot of relevant placements on offer.
- The work experience should reflect the actual job (not being a scivvy).
- It would be beneficial to have a pool of available work placements to start on straight away whilst motivation is high.
- Action – will identify employers to offer work placements.

**6. What do you expect from an employer?****How would you like to be treated at work?**

- They want to be treated equally to everyone else, but want some flexibility due to their background. If manager/supervisor has an issue at work with them they would like to be spoken to correctly (respectfully).
- Employers should have some disclosure in order to be flexible (selected information) which should always remain confidential.
- If timekeeping is an issue, can the employer organise staggered starting times.
- They want to be treated fairly and “Not be given all the crap jobs”.
- Don't want to be given repeated instructions, because of their age.

**7. What could we do different?**

- PA's said would an awareness raising leaflet to employers on general barriers of Care Leavers be helpful?
- Change our name of profiling (Insight Report) – a serial killer is profiled.

**8. Actions to be taken**

- Fred to arrange employers to offer regular work experiences.
- Fran to arrange next Focus Group Meeting.