

### How the Embracing Diversity Project helped Aisha:

Aisha had a very difficult time seeking employment. She found it difficult to concentrate and give her full attention to any type of work related activity.

With Bury EST's help Aisha started a work placement in November 2002 as an administration assistant at the Asian Development Association of Bury (ADAB). It was from here that Aisha began to think about and form her long term objectives. Her interaction with the general public helped greatly with her confidence and Aisha successfully completed her placement.

Aisha was successfully selected to undertake another work placement at Bury Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) in June 2003. Aisha worked on several mini projects over the summer period. Staff at EYDCP were very supportive and Aisha felt very comfortable and was quickly made to feel part of the team.

### Aisha Today:

In September 2003 Aisha returned to EYDCP again on a work placement with a view to a job. In December 2003 she was offered a paid part-time position as a receptionist. Aisha accepted the offer.

Aisha has said she feels, **"very happy at work,"** and the team at EYDCP is, **"very friendly and extremely supportive."**

According to her manager, Sue Sykes, **"Aisha is growing in confidence since she started working on reception. She is reliable, efficient and a valuable member of the team."**

Co-worker, Helen also works on reception and has acted as a mentor for Aisha. As Helen puts it, **"Aisha is keen to learn and get involved."**

Aisha has been a client of Bury Employment Support & Training for about 3 years. Following a variety of health problems and long term unemployment, Aisha found herself suffering from low self esteem, depression and a low level of confidence.



**Best Practice:**

Throughout our many years of experience of working with our clients and employers we have learnt a lot. The summary below shows what we feel is our 'Best Practice' for working with someone from this particular client group.

**Develop community based partnerships:** This could include community based employment support staff, employment 'drop-ins' and information/advice sessions.

**Encourage job applications from the black and minority ethnic community:** Place job adverts in publications read by these communities. Develop 'Community Recruitment' initiatives such as recruitment days and circulating job vacancies via local mosques and community centres. Identify barriers for applicants prior to interview and find out how to overcome these barriers now and in the future.

**Identify Employer Champions:** Highlight the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring to other employers. These include enhancing products and services, expanding the customer base, up-skilling the workforce and enhancing an organisations ethical and corporate image.

**Provide work trials and work experience opportunities:** Good opportunity for those who lack job references, to demonstrate their vocational skills and suitability for a job.

**Employer recognition of overseas qualifications:** For jobs that require a specific qualification, ensure that equivalent qualifications are also recognised in job adverts and person specifications. Contact [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk) to validate overseas qualifications.

**Raise workforce awareness:** The most effective way is by employing from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Complement this by providing training on cultural and ethnic diversity. These actions will help promote acceptance, understanding and an appreciation of cultural differences. Meet the needs of minority ethnic staff with basic skills training including ESOL. Develop a 'culturally sensitive' working environment, by ensuring that catering facilities, dress codes and religious practices meet the needs of a culturally diverse workforce.

**Adopt 'diversity friendly' recruitment practices:**

- Promote employment equality by ensuring equal opportunity/diversity policies and procedures and monitoring systems are in place.
- Ensure that the qualifications & experience required to do a job are not a barrier to potentially suitable candidates applying for a position and reflect the skills required.
- Use simple and accessible recruitment information in plain English and a range of languages.
- Look past an accent! Judge a person's suitability for a job on what they say not their ability to pronounce perfect English.
- An applicant presenting a work permit doesn't mean more paperwork! Most have contact numbers on them where you can gain more information.
- Ensure job screening tests used are not culturally biased.
- Working interviews for job applicants with language difficulties may be more effective than conventional interviews for assessing a candidate's suitability for a job.

**Factsheet 01** ◀

# Embracing Diversity

is a funded project working to get disadvantaged people into employment and achieve greater diversity in our workplaces to reflect the communities in which we live.

If you are an employer or potential client who would like further details about what we could do for you please contact us.

Stockport Employment Services

**0161 474 5903**

Bury Employment Support & Training

**0161 761 4662**