

## **Written Update from Ailsa Whitmarsh, Job Centre Plus Integrated Partnerships Manager**

We are currently in the planning stages for our Jobsfair on 4 April.

We currently have 21 employers/recruitment agencies that have agreed to attend, and all have vacancies.

Promoting the Jobsfair to employers has been via a mix of approaches; emailing; follow up calls; promotion via Kent Business Radio; through external partners and stakeholders; employer databases - MBC & Town centre Management.

The most effective response has been via direct telephone approaches.

We have found that a large number of the employers that have supported this type of event in the past are not recruiting at present, or do not need to attend as they receive on-going applications on spec/word of mouth.

We will be happy to share our evaluation of the event with you, as we will be tracking all individuals who attend for a 13 wk period.

The Jobsfair and Skills event held in September last year was on a smaller scale, and provided many customers with a range of opportunities to access additional training.

Approximately 35 customers accessed training, many of the customers who attended were not JCP so we were unable to track outcomes for these.

Juliet Shand at Golding Homes can provide a more comprehensive evaluation.

The wage incentive for 18 - 24 year olds is a valuable incentive for employers (see attached) and can be used as a self-marketing tool for customers unemployed 6 months plus. We have marketed this through a range of mediums - as above, and is of particular value/interest to SMEs. Employers can also access funding for apprenticeships, and there is a mix of funding available to support this.

We also offer free bespoke training for employers (see above) who are recruiting, ensuring that the individuals they interview are pre-selected and have accessed training specific to the employers business.

We recently hosted a Kent Employers Award Ceremony, recognising the contributions employers have made to supporting our customers - eg providing work experience opportunities, training, mentoring - this was very well received and provided an excellent networking and information sharing opportunity.

I have a good relationship with the Economic and Regeneration team at Maidstone council, and find them to be supportive in assisting with promotion of incentives etc through their databases and networks. Continuing with this relationship and encouraging/highlighting JCP engagement with new businesses coming into the area is helpful and engaging with business forums is invaluable.