

Catalyst Ebulletin

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Momentum's Café Society

A new Momentum Skills café outlet in Glasgow is offering not just panini and a cappuccino to locals but it is also serving up a valuable taste of workplace experience to help disadvantaged people on the road to finding a job in mainstream employment.

Momentum Skills has opened Café Momentum in the new Heart of Scotstoun community centre to help train people who have a disability or a learning difficulty in the skills which will stand them in good stead for getting their first real job.

Out front, amidst the tables and chairs, it seems like any other café. But behind the counter a small revolution is going on as the training kitchen aims to transform the lives of the individuals working there by helping to give them the necessary skills to allow them to enjoy independent living.

Gerry Mullaney, café manager, said: "Our overriding purpose is to train the people who come to us in the work ethic. This is likely to be their first venture into the workplace, and we want to familiarise them with the routine of going to work. Our hope is that we will give the participants enough of a skills base that they will be able to work in the wider workplace."

The training is both practical and theory based. Gail Sinclair, area manager for Momentum Skills, said: "The café is providing skills and training to give them an understanding of what is expected from them in a catering workplace in order to increase their employability."

For more information about Café Momentum, contact Gail Sinclair on 0141 554 8822 or email g Sinclair@momentumskills.org

Small Steps, Giant Leaps

Taking the first step towards employment can sometimes feel like a giant leap for people with disability, especially if an individual has been out of work for some time.

But a new initiative in the west of Scotland aims to transform that leap into a series of more manageable steps – with the aim of assisting disabled people to find meaningful employment, and reduce their risk of social exclusion.

Strathclyde Momentum Programme has been launched by Momentum Skills with the help of funding from the Big Lottery. Operating across Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire it intends to put 900 disabled people in touch with job-seeking services over the three years of the project.

George Waddell, manager of the programme, said: "We offer a holistic person-centered approach with the aim of supporting and enabling disabled people to break down the barriers to accessing employment.

"We believe that everybody should have access to the skills, knowledge and experience they need in order to maximise their chances of employment."

The programme aims to deliver a series of steps – custom tailored to individual needs and aspirations – that will support disabled people to access employment through job support, and work placements, to ensure that people are able to move into the paid employment of their choice.

For more information about Strathclyde Momentum Programme, contact George Waddell on 0141 813 7012 or email gwaddell@momentumskills.org

Changing Lives ... By Changing Outlooks

A new lottery-funded Momentum Skills project is having a dramatic effect on the lives of people with brain injuries.

Changing Lives North of Tyne was only launched a few months ago but it is already helping over 50 people with a range of neurological conditions in Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland.

It has been set up to try to overcome one of the key problems which affect people with brain injuries – the feeling of isolation.

The project aims to reduce social isolation and exclusion by providing a "pathway of rehabilitation" starting with offering support to people to re-engage with activities they used to participate in or simply to access other activities in the local area that they have never tried.

Changing Lives is a partnership between Momentum Skills and the Stroke Association and it works closely with Momentum's existing services in the Newcastle area including Access to Work.

Kelly Oliver Dougall, Community Integration Co-ordinator with Momentum Skills, said: "Brain injury has a massive impact on a person's life – affecting confidence, mobility, emotions and employment.

"It can also affect relationships with family members which can sometimes break down because of the pressures that can result from a brain injury.

“Our new Changing Lives service aims to support not only people who have had a brain injury, but also their family members and carers so that they feel less isolated and can start to gain a sense of belonging in their community again.”

Changing Lives uses existing provision where appropriate or sets up groups where there is a need. These groups will be based around a particular interest, such as photography, singing, cooking, bowling or walking or might be based around a particular condition – for example the epilepsy group which was identified and set up shortly after the service launched.

Oliver Dougall added: “The overall aim of the service is to promote independence, confidence and self-esteem and all activities will reflect this – gradually building in engagement in community activities, then phasing out our support, all the time working with the individual to ensure this is at the right pace.”

A major plus is that because the service is Lottery-funded there is no cost to the person who uses the service.

For more information about Changing Lives, contact 0191 232 0234 or email changinglives@momentumskills.org

About Momentum

Momentum is a leading not-for-profit organisation providing rehabilitation, training and care services for disabled and socially-excluded people throughout the UK. Momentum comprises Momentum Skills, Momentum Care and Haven.

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