

Life Changing Jobs

Julie Ridley & Fiona Wallace

VIAS Conference Real Jobs How? - 24th March 2009



Summary

1. What research says about jobs
2. Life changing jobs research pilot
3. What we learnt
4. Some key themes
5. Future plans



Summary of Key Research Messages

- Positive benefits, 'life changing'
- Research also finds -
 - Many in unpaid or 'voluntary' work
 - Many jobs under 10 hours
 - Modest earnings from jobs under 16 hours
 - Few jobs 16 hours +
- Positive reports from employers
- Getting the right support
- Uncertain funding for SE
- Few dedicated SE services in Scotland



Principles of Best Practice

- Real jobs/valued roles
- Presumption of employability
- Learn on the job
- Flexible support
- Promote early participation in workforce
- Equality of access
- Personalisation
- Participation and involvement
- Self determination and choice
- Social inclusion

(Source: Ridley and Hunter, 2007)



Life Changing Jobs Research Pilot

- UCLan/VIAS/Edinburgh University
- Partnership – steering group
- 6 individuals' stories
- Different perspectives
- Test narrative and visual methods
- Identify key themes and issues



Questions We Asked

Who were the people interviewed?

What kind of jobs did they have?

Had they worked before?

How did they get their jobs?

What hours did they work?

Was getting paid important to them?

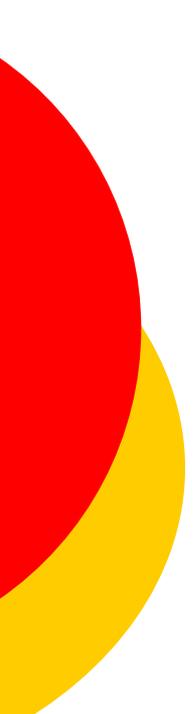
What other things were important?

Had it made a difference to their lives?



Who Was Interviewed

- Jenny (28), Edinburgh, Intowork
- Paul (21), Edinburgh, Intowork
- Susan (36), Dundee, Kemback SE
- Mike (47), Dundee, Kemback SE
- John (25), North Lanarkshire SE
- Lizzie (24), North Lanarkshire SE



What Jobs Did They Have?

- Data input for commercial firm
- Baggage handler at an airport
- Domestic assistant in a hospital
- General domestic assistant at social work office
- Office assistant in commercial firm
- Office assistant in school



What Previous Experience of Work Did They Have?

- First paid job
- Part time paid work
- Voluntary work
- Unpaid work
- Placements
- Adult Resource Centre



Jenny

“I’ve had a lot of experiences of work. I did do a few placements where I was not treated very well because they didn’t understand my disability. They thought I was a trouble maker...There have been a few placements that I’ve been made out to be the bad guy, but a lot of good placements have been excellent.”



Susan

“I helped with the lunches at the sheltered housing complex...I used to set the tables for the older people, get the plates ready, serve their lunches, and clear all the tables...I worked 9 hours a week. It was only voluntary work. I was there for 3 years getting £20 a week because that’s what you’re allowed to earn when you’re on benefits.”



How Did They Get the Job?

- Supported employment service
- Vocational profile
- Job search/finding
- Application forms
- Interviews
- Designated jobs
- Job carving



Jenny

- “I resigned from another job and Linda kept looking for jobs for me and just by chance she saw this advertisement in the paper...So she just applied for it with me, with my consent, because that’s the kind of job I wanted to do because I’m good at data entry, I’m good on computers, I’m good at attention to detail and my memory’s quite good... So she applied on my behalf with my permission. And I got an interview, and I was successful at the interview...”



Susan

“The supported employment team helped me get the job...It would be kind of difficult to do on your own because not everyone is as nice to you...Before I got this job Jacquie came into the interview with me and showed me some wee techniques, ways of answering questions and how you ask questions at interviews. If you’ve never had interviews it can be very hard so it prepared me and I got the job.”



John's Job Support Worker

“We spoke to the employer and they seemed really quite keen on finding out a bit more about who we are and what we did. So we had a meeting with them, explained about Ryan and what he was looking for... Once they met him they decided to carve out a special role for him to make a job for him. So that's how we started off really, just cold calling the employer, phoning up and seeing if they were interested - who we are and what we're about.”



What Hours Did They Work?

- Between 16-25 hours per week



What We Learnt From the Pilot

- Minor and major changes in people's lives
- Getting paid for work is important
- Feeling a sense of belonging at workplace critical – “part of the team”
- Benefits e.g. structure, social life, money, etc
- Doing a good job made people feel good about themselves
- Comparing different accounts



Paul

- “Now that I’m in a job...I’d rather be working than doing nothing. I suppose a couple of years ago the thought of waking up and watching TV all day was brilliant, but now it’s boring because I’m used to doing work.”



Jenny

- “It means the world...The best thing about working is not about the money or freedom to do what I want, although this is great. The best thing about this job is this is the first permanent part time job I’ve had since leaving school. It boosts my self esteem as well – that’s the most important thing... I feel I can lift my head up high knowing that I’m contributing to society now.”



Mike

“I just like the job, I like doing things...If they didn't pay me I just wouldn't go back. They would just be taking the Mick.”



Susan

- “I like meeting all the people, and I like helping people. There’s nothing about the job I don’t like. The most important thing about my job is keeping the hospital clean, keeping up the standards. A lot of people say I’m more confident now, that I’ve come out of myself. I feel that I’ve changed a lot.”



Susan's Mum

- “Having this job means I don't have to worry about her anymore. She is quite capable of managing without me being there...We're not feeling that we have to be so protective...”



Lessons for Future Research

- Work closely with projects/ services
- Time to get to know people
- Sampling
- Variety of methods needed
- Harder and takes longer to gather information from some people
- Important to speak to others
- Visual information – what?
- Worth exploring meaning of social inclusion



Future Plans

- Case studies
- VIAS Newsletter
- Talks
- Journal articles
- Research proposal



Contacts for More Information:

Julie Ridley University of Central
Lancashire 01772 893402

JRidley1@uclan.ac.uk

Julia Cowie/David Anderson, VIAS

Info@viascotland.org.uk

Susan Hunter, University of
Edinburgh 0131 651 1461

Susan.Hunter@ed.ac.uk