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Steps 2 Work

A programme contracted by Work and Income to help unemployed people into work is producing positive outcomes.

Lower Hutt contracted services provider ACTS Institute runs a programme called Steps 2 Work targeting Work and Income clients who have been on a benefit for more than 26 weeks.

Of 16 clients referred to a recent course, ten found full-time work after graduation, three went into further training and two are participating in a work preparation club and are expected to gain work.

Recent participant Troy Eckersley is a testimony to the hard work put in by the ACTS team. Troy, 18, was one of the youngest participants on the programme. He was previously on an Unemployment Benefit and was referred to ACTS by Work and Income.

Former Work and Income employee and now a facilitator for ACTS, Shona Kerr, found Troy work experience at Daytona Indoor Raceway but the placement hit a bump when the business changed ownership at the end of his four week stint.

However, ACTS Manager Chris Slater convinced the new owners that keeping Troy on as a permanent employee would be beneficial for both of them.



Troy Eckersley in one of the go-karts at the Daytona Indoor Raceway.

Troy has now worked full-time at Daytona since September and is loving the independence work offers him. He briefs customers on the use of the go-karts, monitors the drivers, and is teaching himself how to weld as he assists in repairing damaged go-karts.

Troy says he found the Steps 2 Work course and the staff at ACTS Institute very motivational. "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for ACTS," he says.

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Expo Targets Students

Work and Income recently promoted training and employment opportunities at a Wellington expo targeting high school students with special needs.

The third annual Transition Expo aimed to equip students with the appropriate information to help them move smoothly from school into further study or employment.

Co-ordinator Kellyanne Tong from Emerge Supported Employment Trust (an employment service for disabled people) says the day proved to be very popular with over 300 people visiting the 46 stalls.

Kellyanne, in conjunction with Greg Sayer from Capital Support (a needs assessment and service co-ordination agency within the Capital Coast District Health Board) and with funding from

the Wellington City Council, produced a guide for expo visitors titled Exploring Futures. It outlines a range of disability services throughout Wellington, and provides answers to frequently asked questions for students making the transition from high school to work.

Work and Income was on site to answer general questions on financial assistance and entitlements. Work Broker Helen MacDonal was also available to talk about her specialist work area – helping clients on Sickness and Invalid's Benefits into work.

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The Exploring Futures guide is available by
phoning 04 384 7456, or at
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*Specialist Work Broker
Helen MacDonal at the
recent Transition Expo.*

Work Track For DPBs

A Work and Income work readiness programme for clients on the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) has proved successful with participants now more confident about the job search.

The programme was initiated by the clients wanting some guidance on how to become more work ready.

A Work Track programme was tailored to meet their needs and subsequently clients from Lower Hutt, Johnsonville and Naenae were invited to participate in a two week course in Wainuiomata.

The course was facilitated by Work Track Facilitator Joe Foase and DPB Case Manager Michelle Gerrard.

Sixteen clients attended the course and were then monitored for progress each week for the next seven weeks.

The course consisted of speakers from recruitment agencies Kelly Services and Drake International, security company Recon Security and Work and Income work brokers.

Clients participated in interview role plays, had their CVs prepared and were then profiled by work brokers to employers.

They learned how to address their individual barriers to work, and how to set personal goals and to be more motivated. Participants were also given some pointers on identifying the needs of the local job market.



Wainuiomata DPB Case Manager Michelle Gerrard, one of the course facilitators.

Throughout the programme clients were informed of the financial assistance they can access under the Working for Families package, once they have made the transition to work.

Wainuiomata Service Centre Manager Nikki Leat says the course was positive for the clients who were all ambitious to find work.

Three of the clients are now in work and one is enrolled in further training. Other clients are proactively seeking work through follow-up sessions with Work and Income.

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Promoting Health And Wellbeing

Collaborating with local service providers to promote the range of health and wellbeing services available to older people, their families and caregivers has been the focus this year for Work and Income's Hutt Valley NZ Superannuation team.

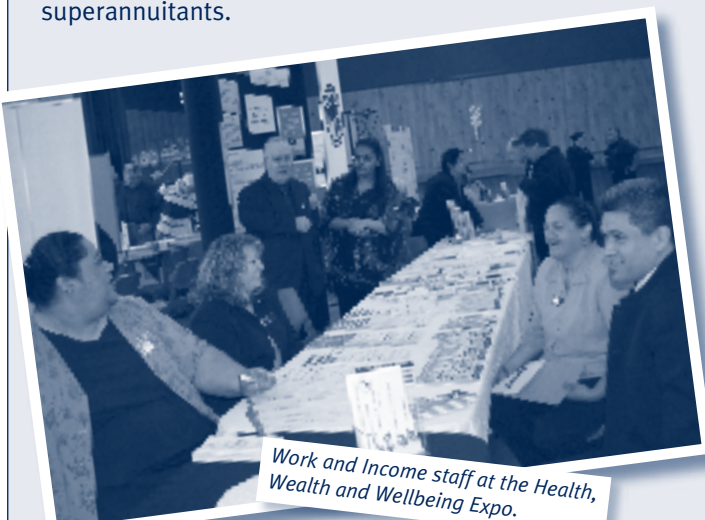
The team's efforts culminated recently at the inaugural Health, Wealth and Wellbeing Expo targeting local superannuitants.

Earlier in the year the team formed a steering group involving other interested parties such as Age Concern, Sigma (a physical assessment agency for residential care) and Supergrans – a voluntary group of older people providing mentoring and support to young families. The steering group met every Wednesday to discuss progress and plan for the event.

The expo was attended by around 1,000 people. There was a range of entertainment on offer such as the local singer Trip Tuau (also a Work and Income case manager) and a Tai Chi display. Local retailers also contributed and donated gifts that were raffled off during the day. Visitors were able to access a range of information such as pre-paying for funerals and emergency home alarms.

The Hutt Valley NZ Superannuation team says the expo was a worthwhile event and the networking that resulted between local agencies and community groups will help ensure future events are just as successful.

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Work and Income staff at the Health, Wealth and Wellbeing Expo.