

How to create a Mainstream position

Scenario: The business of your organisation is going well. Everyone at your workplace is flat out but you're tired of doing all that overtime and you're missing deadlines because no one is free to assist. What you need is another member of staff, right? Here's where the Mainstream Employment Programme can help.

Step 1 – Assess the real need

Take some time to review the way your organisation works. If, after looking at what you're doing and how you're doing it, you still believe you need an additional staff member, decide what you want this person to do.

Step 2 – Draw up a job description

- Ask current staff members what tasks they want help with or need to give away completely.
- Make a note of these and other tasks that no one gets around to doing.
- Add any other tasks that are on your wish-list.
- Start developing a job description. Use a Mainstream Job Proposal Form to jot down your ideas – you can find it on the website, www.mainstream.msd.govt.nz.
- Group the tasks into key responsibilities, but keep the language simple. Key responsibilities might include administration tasks, internal relationship management, monthly accruals or publications etc.

Questions to consider:

- Can the tasks be grouped together into a cohesive job?
- When do the tasks need to be done?
- What skills will be needed to do them?
- What training will be given?
- How will performance be measured?
- Who will the person report to?
- Will any other staff report to this person?
- Who else will they work with on a regular basis?
- How many hours per week will the job take? Will it be full-time or part-time?
- What will you call the position?

Mainstream positions are created so they can be tailored to make the best use of the participant's abilities, and reduce pressure to perform while they find their feet and build up skills. This provides the best chance of success in their new role - a 'win-win' scenario for participants and their employers.

Step 3 – Consult with other staff

When you've completed the first draft of the job proposal, have other staff members review it and provide feedback. Once the feedback is incorporated, you are ready to start looking for a Mainstream-eligible person to fill the created role.

Step 4 – Contact a placement agency

To locate a placement agency close to you that has Mainstream-eligible people available to start work, go to the Association for Supported Employment website www.asenz.org.nz.

Select and contact an agency to discuss your requirements. Let them know you want to create a two-year placement through the Mainstream Employment Programme. The agency will in turn contact Mainstream and you'll be well on your way to filling the gap.

Or contact Work and Income and ask for a Mainstream person in your area.