

Step Ahead Social Enterprise Community Interest Company Annual Report 2019



Message from the CEO



Our purpose is to help and empower people to improve their lives. Often the people we work with are a little lost: perhaps they did not have the best start in life; maybe they haven't realised their purpose or have been side-tracked along the way. We work with these people to help them to gain clarity about their purpose and personal goals, help them discover their route to achievement and then walk with them, holding their hands, on their first steps.

The uniqueness of Step Ahead is its multiple strands of provision which enable us to provide the right solution to address an individual's particular problem or barrier. Always our final aim is to place an individual into suitable, sustained employment.

Over 20 years of building a solid reputation based on our delivery track record and achievements has meant that this year was one of our most successful for securing significant new contracts with new and existing funders, enabling us to help more people and develop new fruitful relationships with employers across London.

We continue to ensure that we evolve with the times and social media rose towards the top of the agenda in 2019. We have been thrilled with the hundreds of positive reviews we have received on Google and Facebook, from customers that have experienced the different elements of our service provision, including employers. This feedback tells us that we are continuing to get it right. Nonetheless, we continue to improve our provision further including e-Learning and digital engagement.

Recruitment continues to be at the very core of our business. We realise that, in order to provide viable pathways to get people into jobs, it is paramount that we have trusted and established relationships with employers that are prepared to commit to our cause. Their motivation is created by the outstanding quality of service and care that is delivered by our staff. Our teamwork is stronger than ever. We truly believe that it is the singular biggest differentiator about Step Ahead: our cohesive team enables us to offer the very best care to our customers.

As we look forward to next year, the horizon looks bright and we remain committed to our cause.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jackie Bedford". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jackie Bedford CEO

Step Ahead's Mission Statement

'The mission, in the first instance is to ensure you know we truly care about helping you achieve your objectives.

Secondly, is to be a renowned and trusted name amongst top employers, job-seekers and learners alike; to be synonymous with efficiency, expertise and enterprise; to provide a quality service delivered by fully trained and informed Consultants who actively listen to your needs and are qualified in providing intelligent solutions.

To achieve this consistently we work hard to create open, consultative partnerships with you whilst maintaining an honest and professional approach at all times. As a team we are ethical yet innovative; focused yet flexible; realistic yet enterprising.

By working with you to create your success, we believe we will achieve ours'



Our Services



Recruitment Service

We provide professional recruitment services for the provision of permanent, temporary and apprentice staff in the retail, security, hospitality & tourism, customer services, cleaning, construction, health and social care, and business and professional services sectors across London.

These services have enabled us to enjoy longstanding, fruitful relationships with a broad scope of high profile employers, many of which additionally partner with us to fulfil their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies. Our company ethics means all our teams work closely together enabling us to provide an all encompassing, added value service to our employer clients.

Our biggest source of business continues to come from referrals, both from employers and participant recommendations, which is a testament to our happy customers and professional work from all our staff.

Employability Training

Supporting defined demographic groups of disadvantaged people across London, including young people aged 18-24 Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), care leavers, people with learning disabilities, etc and providing Information, Advice and Guidance to move towards or into work.

This includes helping to overcome relatively simple issues such as building confidence, interview skills, CV building, but often involves working more intensely on more complex barriers such as cultural issues and the need to fit in with their familiar, but sometimes destructive, environments.

The goal is sustained employment for our participants and we are proud of our diverse team of Work Coaches, Case Workers and Recruitment Consultants, that work hard to bring about a lasting positive change for our customers and their communities.

Skills Development

We support the skills development of the individuals we engage with across personal skills required to be successful in life such as confidence building, developing self esteem, a sense of purpose and dealing with complex individual situational barriers including offending, exclusions from school, substance dependency, experience of care or having caring responsibilities.

We focus on employability training in areas such as teamwork, problem solving, communication which are aimed at developing the key skills needed in the workplace and essential in securing and sustaining employment.

We also deliver regulated qualifications at Entry level 3 to Level 2 in Basic Skills for English, Maths and IT through to Personal and Social Development and entry qualifications required for securing roles in certain sectors such as Retail, Hospitality, Early Years, Health & Social Care and Construction.

Apprenticeship Agency

Our Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) established in 2011 in response to demand from many of our employers within sectors such as Health and Social Care and Construction has an objective is to support young people aged 16-24, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, into an apprenticeship.

We bring together the host employer and candidates, who have completed our ATA 'bootcamps' and been pre-screened against employers specific requirements, support employers in choosing the most appropriate provider and hand-hold all parties through to the delivery of the programme and successful achievement of the apprenticeship.

This year we are pleased to have assisted Imperial College NHS Trust again with 32 young people achieving their apprentice qualification, and 30 of which were offered full time careers with the trust as a result of our efforts.

Commitment to Quality

Our commitment to delivering our services to the highest standard is important for our organisation and why we place a great emphasis to develop and continuously improve our quality frameworks and gain recognised external standards and accreditations.

We are pleased to have gained our Matrix Standard as a recognition of our high standards of Information, Advice and Guidance delivery across the whole company and status as an approved accreditation centre with NCFE.

We have maintained all our other accreditations this year including ISO 14001 for Environmental Management and ISO 9001 for Quality Assurance Management.



Highlights & Achievements



New Contracts, New Projects

We are delighted to have secured an Adult Education Budget contract worth £3.7m with the Greater London Authority to support out of work adults to develop their employability and vocational skills, gain recognised industry qualifications and move into full and part time employment. Competition for the funding was very competitive so well done to everyone involved.

We won a £1m Department of Works and Pensions contract, part funded by European Social Fund, to deliver services in the Coast to Capital region to disadvantaged unemployed and inactive residents to gain basic skills and move into work. This is an very exciting opportunity to expand our services.

We were also reappointed by Southwark Council to deliver the Southwark Works contract for a 3rd year solidifying our commitment in supporting local residents into local jobs and a testament to our successful delivery.

Employer Engagement

Our work with employers on meeting Corporate Social Responsibility aims continues to grow and is illustrated perfectly in our joint working with Land Securities Group (Landsec), the largest commercial property development and investment company in the UK. Step Ahead works collaboratively to provide their partners with a zero cost employment service aimed at helping local residents into work and supports Landsec's commitment to community employment, education and volunteering including their staff volunteering on programmes helping young people develop skills they need to succeed.

We have continued to develop strong partnerships with NHS Trusts across London with our ATA work and gained inclusion on the SUPC (Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium) for recruiting educational back office roles for major Universities and FE colleges across London & South East.

Powerhouse Positive Psychology Training

Our Powerhouse programme has had an enthusiastic response. We have gained commitment to support the programme from several schools in deprived areas of London including Bow School (Tower Hamlets), Capital City Academy (Brent), St Thomas the Apostle College and ARCO Academy (specialist alternative provision in Southwark).

We were delighted that Professor Dibyesh Anand, Head of Department of Politics and International Relations and Dr Andy Aresti from Westminster University's Social Sciences (Criminology) faculty have pledged the interest in measuring impact and outcomes in any future programme delivery.

We also received endorsements from Dora Dixon-Fyle, Councillor and former Mayor of Southwark, Joseph Duncan, Director of Youth Futures and Nick de Bois, former MP and anti-knife crime campaigner, to name a few.

People into Work

The real highlight of our work is always to see the positive impact that we have on the many individuals who we support through our services.

This year we have supported over 1000 people to secure an employment contract, with 60 young people completing their apprenticeship programme, and over 500 unemployed people supported through our funded programmes including over 250 young people NEET aged between 18-24 years old and over 300 people gained a recognised qualification.

In our annual survey 92% employers rated our services as 'Excellent' and in a similar satisfaction survey with participants on our funded programmes 94% rated their support programme as 'Very Good' or better at meeting their individual needs. We looking forward to supporting many more people in 2020 to progress into employment and achieve personal success!

The people we supported in 2019 were:



52% Male & 48% Female



47% - 18-24 years old

27% - 25-34 years old

13% - 35-44 years old

10% - 45-55 years old

3% aged over 55 years

Disabilities



20% had a Learning Difficulty or Disability



28% were lone parents



58% classed themselves as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority



26% were without Basic Skills in English or Maths



Financial Overview



Income Total = £4,422,514

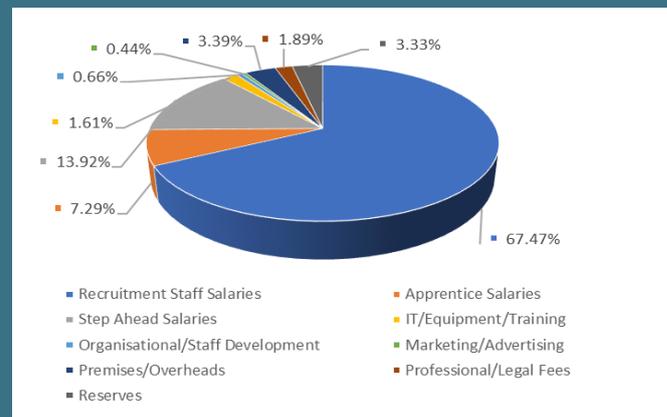
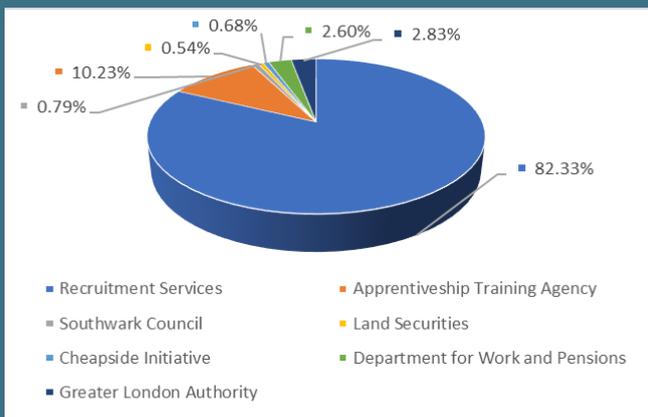
How we generated our income:

- £3,641,032 Recruitment Services
- £452,241 Apprenticeship Training Agency
- £34,744 Southwark Council
- £24,000 Land Securities
- £30,000 Cheapside Initiative
- £115,197 Department of Work and Pensions
- £125,296 Greater London Authority

Expenditure Total = £4,422,514

How we allocated our resources (including committed costs):

- £2,983,939 Recruitment Staff Salaries
- £322,455 Apprentice Salaries
- £615,749 Step Ahead Salaries
- £71,351 IT, Equipment & Training Resources
- £29,018 Organisational & Staff Development
- £19,319 Advertising & Marketing
- £149,674 Premises & Overheads
- £83,643 Insurance, Legal & Professional Fees
- £147,281 Reserves



Our Funders

Thank you to all our funders who without their support we would not be able to deliver our services and continue our growth.

We look forward to working with you all again in 2020 and beyond.



SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



Department
for Work &
Pensions



at the City's heart
CHEAPSIDE



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



Thanks to

We would like to firstly thank all our Employer Partners as without your commitment and collaboration our programmes would not be a success.

A special thanks to all our Partner Networks who ensure that our services meet the needs of the disadvantaged groups we support and offer valuable support services alongside insight into what works and what doesn't.

Finally a big thanks to our staff and volunteers for your enthusiasm and energy, innovation and commitment in delivering our services.

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