

# Together

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM REED IN PARTNERSHIP ●●●

## Tackling joblessness

Reed launches campaign to help preserve jobs and create new ones



**T**he current economic downturn has caused a significant increase in unemployment levels, with further rises predicted. To combat this, the Reed Group of Companies has launched the 'Keep Britain Working' campaign. The aim of the campaign is clear: to help preserve as many jobs as possible and to help create new ones.

The website [keepbritainworking.com](http://keepbritainworking.com) is hosting a nationwide brainstorming session to collate innovative and practical ways to sustain and create jobs. Many companies have already developed effective strategies to combat redundancies, and the new website will enable them to share their ideas.

For example, PLF International, a medium-sized manufacturing firm, is sub-contracting two engineers from a key supplier that is not currently utilising those employees. Elsewhere, Hewlett Packard offered its employees eight days' leave in return for

### The Keep Britain Working website has already received hundreds of responses from businesses

a 10% pay cut for four months, which 96% of them accepted, while Lincoln Electric, a welding firm, trained 68 factory workers and administrative staff as assistant sales people. They generated over £7 million in sales.

The Keep Britain Working website has already received hundreds of responses from businesses across the country. It allows users to search for specific examples relevant to their company, as well as learn how other



organisations, both past and present, have retained jobs and survived recessions. There are weekly polls to gain feedback on national employment issues, and there will be national awards to recognise the best ideas and the most innovative businesses later in the year.

Reed in Partnership has been contributing to this campaign by using our experience within the welfare-to-work sector and our knowledge of the issues facing the long-term unemployed. We have met with government officials to discuss ideas for supporting people facing unemployment and Chris Melvin, our Chief Executive, contributed to the Prime Minister's Job Summit.

To play our role in this, we are strengthening our work with employers to make sure that vacancies are filled quickly and that people are developing the skills that the economy needs.

Please visit [keepbritainworking.com](http://keepbritainworking.com) to submit your own ideas, pledge support to the campaign, or to find out what you can do to make a difference.

### Campaign support

"Whilst we are investing heavily in the capital to support businesses and jobs, the Keep Britain Working website is just as important in seeing us through this downturn."

**Boris Johnson, Mayor of London**

"Keep Britain Working is a tremendous campaign ... Sharing the best ideas and practices that help prevent unemployment is a creative and innovative approach."

**Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**

"I am very pleased to support Keep Britain Working – pooling ideas to steer businesses, employees and thus the country through this recession."

**Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats**

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## OPINION

**Ian Mulheirn**, Director of the Social Market Foundation

### Welfare reform and recession

For all their detractors, the Government's plans for welfare reform are moving in the right direction. The principles behind them are right, but the reforms face major threats to their success – an immediate one being the deteriorating economic situation. Unless tackled, these threats risk discrediting the payment-by-results welfare reform model.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will pilot the proposed Work for Your Benefit scheme from 2010. A firm but fair sanction regime is vital to building public support for a system that provides the help the long-term unemployed need but have been denied in the past. But in the context of the planned Flexible New Deal (FND), this regime is a cause for concern.

Currently, fixed success payments for finding jobseekers work mean that employment service providers only have an incentive to help those whom it is easiest and cheapest to find a job – not those who need support most. It would be socially unjust and very expensive to target a mandatory work

programme at the wrong people. But there is a role for a Work for Your Benefit scheme. Its legitimacy depends on giving all jobseekers appropriate support before resorting to sanctions. This will only occur if success payments to providers reflect the costs involved in helping everyone. Indeed, the DWP Select Committee's recent report, echoing a recent Social Market Foundation publication, suggested that the Department should implement such a payment scheme.

But, right now, the Government needs to act quickly and radically to adapt the payment-by-results approach to current economic conditions. In a deteriorating labour market, focusing resources on work-search is less advisable, while training and subsidised work trials – costly in benign economic conditions as they keep people away from mainstream jobs – become attractive.

Recession provides an opportunity for cost-effective training, and the Government must focus on boosting and maintaining the skills of the workforce. With some changes, the FND and Pathways framework remains the right one to deliver this policy shift.

Changing focus is the only way to ensure the long-term unemployed can take advantage of the economic upswing when it comes.

## Changing tack

Mike Steketee, National Affairs Editor for *The Australian*, considers whether enough is being done to combat the country's rapidly rising unemployment levels

**R**ising unemployment has come more slowly to Australia than other countries, but it is showing every sign of being just as virulent in its economic and social effects. The rate of unemployment jumped from 4.5% to 5.2% in the first two months of the year, quickly making the official forecasts of 5.5% by the middle of 2009 and 7% by mid-2010 look optimistic.

This poses a problem for Job Network, the privatised job placement system that

Various agencies argue that the scheme needs to be re-weighted to shift more of the funding from outcomes to service payments in recognition of their fixed costs.

The problem for the Government is that providers have responded to tenders on the basis of the announced criteria. It cannot change the rules now without risking challenges on probity grounds, although there may be an option to call additional tenders once the results of the existing ones are announced. In the meantime, the Government has made

By contrast, the first stream, meant for the job-ready, gives just A\$11 to the unemployed person through the so-called employment pathway fund, while the provider receives up to A\$440 in job placement fees and up to A\$781 in service fees. The third and fourth streams are for the 25% of unemployed people judged to be most disadvantaged, with up to A\$1,650 going to the jobseeker, up to A\$6,600 in outcome and job placement fees and up to A\$2,736 in service fees.

### Further announcements likely

There are likely to be further announcements, potentially in the Annual Budget in May. Deputy Prime Minister and Employment Minister Julia Gillard is working on a suite of labour market programmes including incentives for intending school leavers to complete their final year at high school or take up skills training.

Broadly speaking, Australia has devoted meagre resources to labour market programmes. In 2006 it ranked fifth lowest amongst the wealthiest 21 OECD nations for employment assistance, just behind the UK. The Howard Government adopted a 'work first' approach, with limited investment in training, wage subsidies or other means of overcoming barriers to employment. This was combined with some of the toughest activity requirements in the OECD, including most unemployment benefit recipients having to apply for 10 jobs a fortnight and to take jobs below their skill levels.

The Rudd Government has softened some of the harshest aspects of these policies. The penalty of loss of unemployment benefits for eight weeks after three breaches of the rules, such as through missing a job interview, is no longer automatic. Instead, there are alternatives based on individual assessments, such as losing benefits only until requirements are met and suspending penalties in return for intensive compliance activities.

High effective marginal rates of taxation, caused by a combination of income tax and the withdrawal of welfare benefits under Australia's means-tested welfare system, reduce incentives to work. While a relatively high minimum wage and low benefit levels can help make full-time work attractive, 28% of jobs are part-time. This figure may be set to change, but only time will tell if the new approach to combat unemployment is as in-depth and intelligent as it clearly needs to be.

### The new system's first stream, for the job-ready, gives just A\$11 to the unemployed claimant

one significant change in response to the recession: newly redundant workers will receive immediate assistance to help them get back into the workforce, rather than having to wait three months.

### Providing services

The help will come via the second stream of the revamped Job Network system, providing services such as career advice, a comprehensive skills assessment, skills development training, referral to targeted education and training and a A\$550 credit for items such as computer courses and work clothes. This stream pays the provider up to A\$2,800 in outcome and placement fees and up to A\$885 in service fees.



Australia pioneered. Introduced by the conservative Howard Government in 1998, the Rudd Labor Government retained it when it came to office at the end of 2007, but have announced changes to apply from July this year.

However, three months before the new scheme is to be implemented, it is already being challenged as the employment agencies are being flooded by increasing numbers of unemployed people, while vacancies are shrinking.

Under Job Network, employment providers receive the bulk of their funding as outcome-based payments. But the jobs that represent those outcomes are increasingly hard to find. So although job placement should be one of the few growth industries in a recession, the two biggest job providers under Job Network (The Salvation Army and Mission Australia) have laid off close to 200 staff between them.

## Reed in Partnership wins Australian contracts

Sharing our experience with a new market

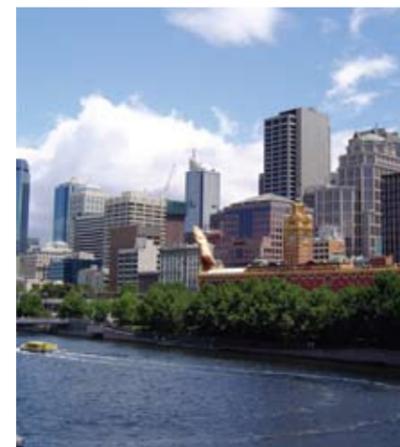
The Australian Government has recently awarded Reed in Partnership three Employment Service Area contracts. The new contracts are the first government contracts won by Reed in Partnership outside of the UK.

The Employment Service Area contracts will assist the long-term unemployed in moving into sustainable work. The contracts will operate in Bayside and Maroondah, which are near Melbourne in the state of Victoria. The third contract will be located in Ipswich in the state of Queensland.

The Employment Service Area contracts, which will be operational in July 2009, will see Reed in Partnership work with a range of customer groups including the long-term unemployed, single parents and the indigenous community.

Chris Melvin, Chief Executive of Reed in Partnership, said: "We are delighted to be the given the opportunity to take our UK experience into the Australian market.

"I am confident that, with our understanding of the needs of employers and our personalised approach to supporting customers, we will help a significant number of people move into sustainable employment."



## Real partnership

How working together has proved beneficial for The Oaklea Trust and Reed in Partnership



The 'in Partnership' part of our name is there for a reason. The best way we can tackle problems is by taking a joined up approach, working with different specialist organisations towards a common goal. Since the company's inception in 1998, Reed in Partnership has worked closely with government agencies, local authorities and many others.

One such organisation is The Oaklea Trust, a charitable company that helps people with disabilities to gain independence. Founded in 1990, the Trust now employs more than 300 people across the country.

The Oaklea Trust and Reed in Partnership have worked together since July 2008 to deliver the Government's New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) programme in Lancashire. The Trust is responsible for a fifth of the programme's provision, and its Outreach Advisers complement Reed in Partnership's offices in Blackburn and Preston.

Together we provide end-to-end support to help people overcome health barriers and secure sustainable employment.

Both companies have benefited from this cooperation. Reed in Partnership has gained from the Trust's extensive experience of working in Lancashire, as well as its contacts with local organisations, excellent knowledge of the area's specific needs and strong reputation within local communities. Meanwhile, the Oaklea Trust has benefited from many of the bespoke welfare-to-work tools Reed in Partnership has developed over the past decade. In addition, the Trust is able to use our Orion computer system and has full access to our marketing materials. Reed in Partnership also provided all Oaklea employees with induction training in the computer and regulation systems.

Gary Rooke, Manager of NDDP Lancashire for Oaklea Trust, says: "Our relationship with Reed in Partnership means that we are able to maximise resources, exchange ideas and best practice, and make sure that everyone in Lancashire has easy access to end-to-end, individually tailored support for their needs."

# Recovery process

David Murphy looks at how the Pathways to Work team help people with ill health move from benefits into employment

**R**eed in Partnership has a proud history of helping people get off benefits and back into work – almost 90,000 over the past 11 years. And when you consider where some of the people we have helped were at the start of their journey, the progress that they have made in the workplace is remarkable.

If anything, the Pathways to Work client group faces an even stiffer challenge than the average person that Reed in Partnership helps back into employment. These people are typically suffering from some form of ill health or disability. Reed in Partnership helps them to overcome these challenges, and find their way back into employment. David Farrell, Senior Operations Manager for Pathways to Work South London, explains how it's done:

"When the client registers, they are assigned to a Personal Adviser, who works with them, develops a relationship with them, and encourages them to be as self-sufficient as they can," says David.

"We treat the initial meeting as a fact-finding mission, which includes an assessment of their readiness for work. This generates ideas and activities that go into an action plan to make that person suitable for employment."

## Practical issues

The assessment goes beyond the client's physical or mental capabilities, looking at practical issues, such as the amount of work experience they have, if any; whether they have an up-to-date CV; and whether they need help with travel costs to attend interviews, and subsequently to get to work.

While David's team does its work with the clients, there's another team working equally hard with local employers to warm them up to the idea of employing people from the Pathways to Work programme.

At a national level, says David, there is a rapidly increasing awareness among employers of what the 'welfare to work' sector can offer, in terms of candidates who are well prepared, well trained, and highly motivated. This forms part of a national government agenda to sign employers up to the Local Employment

Partnerships (LEP) initiative run by Jobcentre Plus, which aims to tackle the increasing recruitment and skills challenges of our labour market and economy.

But at a local level, the Pathways to Work team puts a lot of work into cultivating relationships with smaller, local employers, making them aware of the benefits of employing welfare to work candidates.

"Because of Reed's recruitment background, we have always had a strong employer agenda, so we engage with employers and work with them to identify opportunities to find suitable positions for our clients," says David.

## Help and support

In some instances of course, however willing the candidate, and however skilful the Pathways to Work team, the client's physical or mental health may be such that a return to employment is simply not practical or advisable. But even in these instances, the client is not simply left to their own devices.

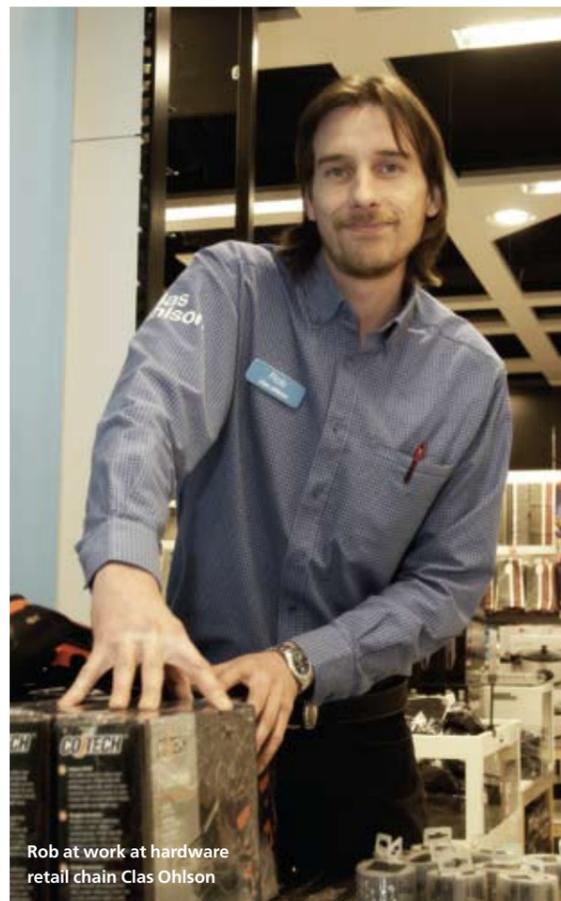
"If we conclude, after assessing the client, that their health is such that it's not really realistic or practical to put them forward for work, we will offer them different forms of support," says David. "There's a lot of partnership activity at

## These are people who are typically suffering from some form of ill health or disability making the job hunt harder

all levels with external organisations, the charitable sector, and allied health organisations, where we can help an individual to get in touch with other support groups to offer more specific help with their condition and to help them manage their situation.

"So if we know they are not capable of work in the short or medium term, we won't just leave them hanging. We will find them some form of help and support now, so that later we may be able to move them closer to employment."

Something the Pathways to Work team does with a great deal of success.



Rob at work at hardware retail chain Clas Ohlson

## Winning the battle: Rob Brooks's story

Rob Brooks had been out of work for 15 years, since being diagnosed with cancer in 1993. After a ten-year battle with the disease, he went into remission in 2003 but, due to the severity of his illness, had not made the return to employment. He was convinced that he would not be able to work again.

When he joined Reed in Partnership's Pathways programme in Bromley, Robert met his Personal Adviser Nick, who could see that Rob needed help with the practical things such as creating a CV. He was also not comfortable with the process of searching for a job.

Nick referred him to the Quick Start programme, where the trainer, Lucy, worked on Rob's CV and helped him with job search techniques. Rob got to know other members of the Quick Start group,

which, alongside the interview training he received, helped him to build up his self-confidence.

Rob soon learned how to manage things for himself and eventually felt confident enough to make the transition into work.

## Following a long battle with cancer, Rob feared he would never work again. Reed in Partnership helped him find a job within two months

Nick suggested that the opportunities available at Clas Ohlson, a hardware retail chain, might be a good match for Rob's skills and helped him prepare for the screening and interview.

Following a successful interview, Rob started work in November – only two months after he had joined the programme.



Sherine Booth addresses the Child Poverty Summit

## Fulfilling an ambition: Sherine Booth's story

Sherine Booth, a single parent from Kilburn, had not worked full-time since 1996. She is just one of the success stories from Reed in Partnership's Single Parent Programme. However, with an eight-year-old to support, returning to work was a priority. "I decided it was time for me to follow what I wanted to do, which was to work with children, but I lacked confidence and direction," she explains.

In the Kilburn Single Parent Office, Sherine's Personal Adviser helped her develop a CV, attend mock interviews, fill out forms for working tax credit and search for teaching vacancies. Sherine also went on the Journey course, where she really flourished. One month later, she secured an interview at a local primary school and was offered the position of Teaching Assistant. She is now training to become a teacher. "I'm really enjoying the job – it's fulfilling, challenging and rewarding at the same time."

In late November, Sherine was invited to speak at the government's Child Poverty Summit. Taking the stage, she spoke of her journey from long-term unemployment to teaching, and made suggestions on ways that groups in London could work together to help end child poverty.

Hopefully, Sherine's story will inspire those who attended, including Boris Johnson, ministers and business leaders.

## Where there's a will: Michael Seeney's story

When Michael Seeney joined Reed in Partnership in May 2008 he was keen to work, but had serious health problems to surmount. In 2004, Michael underwent a quadruple bypass heart operation and the aftercare left him feeling withdrawn and lethargic. He was, however, determined to get a job. His Personal Adviser Anna worked with him to update his CV, search for jobs and obtain travel expenses for interviews; she also provided useful advice and guidance.

Michael was soon offered a place as a Cargo X-Ray Operator with ICTS at Heathrow Airport. As Anna says, "Michael is an inspiration in that where there is a will, there is always a way." Michael was the first customer to start work from our South London Pathways



Michael Seeney talks to a Personal Adviser

## Michael has been promoted to a supervisory role and has good opportunities for career development

contract. Since then, Michael has been promoted to a supervisory role, and now works in Sterile Services at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, which means less travelling for him. With good opportunities for personal and career development, Michael thoroughly enjoys his work.



## Weathering adversity

William Keegan, Senior Economics Commentator for *The Observer*, compares this recession to those of the past

It was after the horrors of high unemployment and the hunger marches of the years between the first and second world wars that full employment became a central aim of the policies of both Labour and Conservative governments. For a long time, unemployment seldom rose above 2 to 3% of the labour force, and much of this reflected 'frictional unemployment' – people temporarily registered as unemployed while moving between jobs.

But after the 'Golden Age' of the late 1940s to the early 1970s, things got more difficult. Unemployment rose sharply during the oil crisis of the mid 1970s, during the early days of Margaret Thatcher's government in the 1980s, and in the early 1990s under John Major. In each case the rise in unemployment was largely caused, or at least tolerated, by government policy, as accelerating inflation resulted in higher interest rates, increased taxes and cuts in public spending.

This recession is altogether different. Inflation is hardly the problem; indeed, policymakers are worried about the prospect of deflation. The only sense in which this recession could be attributed to economic policy is that in recent years policymakers were so pleased with their apparent success in controlling inflation that they ignored warnings that the speculative boom in the prices of houses and financial assets was distinctly unhealthy.

In the early 1980s the recession hit manufacturing industry in the Midlands and the North particularly hard. In the

early 1990s unemployment also affected 'Middle England' and the South. This time the recession is all-pervasive: not only is unemployment rising sharply in manufacturing, where output has recently been running at an alarming 12% below the level of a year ago, but the City of London is seeing massive lay-offs as a result of the banking crisis, and the repercussions are being felt far beyond the reaches of the City – not least in the reported crisis in the restaurant business.

Thatcher was elected in 1979 after a successful propaganda campaign proclaiming that 'Labour Isn't Working', when unemployment was around 1 million. Unemployment now is already at 2 million, and the collapse in output has yet to be fully reflected in the unemployment statistics. At times like this, employers usually put employees on short time, in the hope that the loss of business is only temporary. When it becomes clear that things are worse than feared, the redundancies are announced.

The Government and the Bank of England have cut interest rates, taken dramatic measures to increase the money supply, and tolerated a remarkable rise in the budget deficit in an effort to ease the economic and social adversity. Critics who complain that they are sowing the seeds of future inflation are perhaps wide of the mark. Of course corrective measures should be taken in to reduce the budget deficit. But the problem at the moment is that this recession threatens to turn into a depression, and every available instrument of policy is needed to contain the damage.

## Helping single parents

What are the constraints facing single parents keen to work? Laurie Bell from Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion reports on new research

The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, Save the Children and Reed in Partnership have been working together on a research project about the constraints to sustainable job entry faced by single parents.

The project has focused on people receiving employment support through Reed in Partnership's Single Parent Employment Zones, and the research is being conducted in the context of the Government's commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020, and in relation to the role of sustainable employment as a route out of poverty.

In December 2008 and January 2009, nine focus groups with programme

### The Government has committed to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020

participants and nine interviews with Personal Advisers and Business Managers were conducted across six Single Parent Employment Zone site offices in London and Liverpool. Issues examined in the fieldwork include: key barriers to finding sustainable employment for single parents; the key elements of a 'good quality' sustainable job for single parents; the role of employers and importance of employer engagement; and the impact of the recession on single parents and Reed in Partnership's ability to find them sustainable work.

The findings of the research are being analysed by the team at Inclusion, with the finished report due to be published later this year.



## Q&A

George Peacock, National Employer Services Manager, Reed in Partnership

### What does your job involve?

I develop and deliver a consistent and coherent employer-focused strategy for the company in the UK. As well as the more traditional sales leadership and organisational aspects, I manage a number of projects and visit employers.

### How are the current economic conditions impacting on your work?

Unemployment is increasing. Many of the employers we have historically relied on for placing our customers are either not taking on as many staff or are shedding labour. It is therefore more difficult to find employment opportunities.

Those who are taking on new employees expect more flexibility from them and are often changing plans. We have seen many instances of delays in job starts, job freezes and so on.

### What are the main benefits for employers working with Reed in Partnership?

We tend to focus on our service being free of charge. However, I also look at the broader impact on an employer's costs. Our strategy of screening and preparing our customers for work through both the motivation and barrier removal aspects delivered by our Operation Teams and our various

employer-led courses – what we call our 'Routeways' – makes a big difference to employers. When we get it right we can deliver a much higher percentage of employees from interview to appointment (80% is not unusual) and in a faster time. The alternative, which often sees the employer having to interview and screen large numbers of applicants themselves, takes up a lot of their managers' time and thus costs a lot of money. We also stress our aim of ensuring customers are put in jobs that offer a strong prospect of retention.

### What type of employers are you currently working with?

The Account Management teams I am directly responsible for are looking to significantly broaden the range of both jobs and positions. As the recession continues, there will be more companies either going bust or

shedding employees and we need to ensure we have sufficient choice for our customers. We are also trying to expand the range of job sectors. Historically, account management jobs were focused on retail, cleaning, catering and security. Now we also have many jobs in sectors such as social care, banking and distribution. In the last few weeks, we've also added nursing, track maintenance, rail and finance positions.

### What feedback have you had from companies who have employed your people?

Our proposition for preparing customers for work and the quality of delivery from PAs marks us out. I think employers feel we understand their needs. Our Routeways strategy shows we are trying to ease our customers into their jobs and prepare them to hit the ground running.

## Helping employers find the right people

Routeways training, designed specifically for NCP Services, has been hugely beneficial for employees and employer alike. The key is providing candidates who are better equipped to do the job on offer

NCP Services is one of the largest transport services businesses in the UK, employing more than 4,500 people nationwide. The company has strict employee requirements and a stringent application process that it follows when recruiting Civil Enforcement Officers (Traffic Wardens).

A year ago, Reed in Partnership organised a two-day event designed to help its customers who were applying to NCP Services. Since then, Reed in Partnership employees have spent time

### We have helped increase NCP Service's employee retention rate from 42% to 67%

adapting course materials and expanding the training in response to the particular requirements of the NCP Services recruitment process.

Central to this has been the relationship between Reed in Partnership employees and Alistair Kirkland, the Process Manager for NCP Services. Over the last year he has provided invaluable feedback. For example, Alistair told us that some employees were



struggling to pass the Parking Contravention Codes test, without which they cannot start work. In response, Reed in Partnership added new material and expanded the course to include this training. Alistair says: "Reed in Partnership's Routeways course has [helped us employ] a better and more informed calibre of person for the Civil Enforcement Officer role. In fact, Routeways was so successful that we have

now implemented it as a way of recruiting across other London divisions."

NCP Services' Routeways training has a 70% conversion into work – and its trainers are aiming to reach 75% soon. By providing candidates who are better equipped for the job, Reed in Partnership has helped NCP Services increase its employee retention rate from 42% to 67% in the last six months alone.



# Skills required

Sam Freedman, head of the Education Unit for Policy Exchange, on the importance of work-based learning and adult skills

**T**hink tank Policy Exchange recently started a major project focusing on work-based learning and adult skills. The subject is particularly topical given the sector reforms recently announced by the Government, coupled with the current economic turmoil. Most politicians, regardless of party, agree that the new economy that will eventually rise from the ashes of this recession must be built on a highly skilled workforce.

In recognition of the importance of the topic, Reed in Partnership is part-sponsoring Policy Exchange's work and guiding its researchers through the key issues.

One such issue is how skills policy is integrated with the ongoing welfare to work reforms. There needs to be a greater

## The new economy that will eventually rise must be built on a highly skilled workforce

connection between these two policy areas, and Reed in Partnership employees report that they would like to create stronger links between relationships with employers gained through Train-to-Gain brokerage and those involving welfare to work.

It seems logical that if a company being advised on their skills needs has vacancies, the advisors should be able to help with that problem too. Likewise, if a claimant is introduced to an employer through a welfare to work programme it is crucial

that their skills continue to be developed in their new job, beyond the period covered by that programme. Getting stuck in low-paid low-skilled work can demoralise people and lead to further periods of unemployment.

This all raises broader questions about the purpose of skills policy. Politicians spend a lot of time announcing targets for the number of people who should gain qualifications like apprenticeships, but these qualifications need to be linked to a real increase in skills, and they also have to be valuable to companies.

Moreover, until we systematically improve the quality of management practice in the UK – an area in which we have historically been very weak – our companies will not be able to make the best use of the skills we already have. As a result, one of the key strands of the report will be how to better integrate skills policy with both welfare and business policy.



# Boosting employment

## Successful jobs fair held in Haringey

Our Pathways to Work office in Haringey recently hosted a successful employment workshop and jobs fair for people on health-related benefits. The event was attended by 126 job seekers from across North and North-East London plus a wide range of support organisations, including Mencap, START and Dering. Members of local Jobcentre Plus offices also attended.

Reed in Partnership sourced over 300 job vacancies for the event and showcased the support it offers job seekers on health-related benefits, including the Condition Management Programme, 'Journey', and 'Routes to Success' training programmes.

Through the Pathways to Work programme thousands of people on health-related benefits are being supported into employment. We hope to build on the success of the Haringey jobs fair across our other programmes.



Reed in Partnership's Tom Millar talks to Nicola Sturgeon MSP

## Nicola Sturgeon MSP visit

Reed in Partnership's Govan office in East Glasgow recently received a visit from Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister for Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing in the Scottish Parliament. Tom Millar, Operations Director, took her on a tour of the office and introduced her to staff and customers. He said: "Keeping Scotland in work is a priority for the Scottish Parliament, and we hope to play as big a part as we can in helping achieve this."

Nicola Sturgeon said: "It was great to meet the Personal Advisers and to speak to people benefitting from the service. I was

really impressed with the work that Reed in Partnership is doing to help people find jobs, both here and across the entire city; I hope they will continue their good work."

Since the first dedicated single parent office opened in 2004, Reed in Partnership Personal Advisers have helped place 2,000 single parents into work in Glasgow. We have also registered over 5,000 parent participants in the city. Glasgow has proportionally more single parents than the rest of Scotland, and lower levels of employment, making our work here all the more important.

# The work of the Reed Foundation

Alec Reed, founder of the Reed Group, talks to Laura Mazur about charity, great ideas and why he can't sleep

When Alec Reed opened his first job agency in an office borrowed from an estate agent in Hounslow in 1960, he took his first step toward creating what has become not only the UK's leading specialist recruiters, but one with a strong presence across the world. The companies in the group now include Reed Specialist Recruitment, Reed International, Reed Learning and Reed in Partnership.

His success in building up the company has enabled him to pursue his strong belief in making a big difference through active engagement in charitable and social causes. This has been a constant theme throughout his career, beginning with his work with drug addicts in London in the mid-1970s and culminating in the Reed Foundation.

## A unique approach

The Foundation, which emerged from the charity Mr Reed first set up with money he had made from selling a chain of drug stores, owns 18% of Reed through shares he bought in the market. This entrepreneurial approach to funding illustrates his belief that charity isn't just about giving money but using a combination of skills and finance to help people help themselves.

One of the first charities he set up, Ethiopiaid, in 1989, was in response to a visit he had made to Ethiopia with his wife. The charity is now a well-established fundraising organisation that has donated over £20 million to the country. It works through local partners to help alleviate poverty and sickness and advance education through encouraging self-sufficiency, and has grown to the extent that it now has offices in the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Australia and, recently, Canada.

One of the many projects that has made an enormous difference is the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, which helps women who have been left incontinent after giving birth. Ethiopiaid also does some great work with its local partner Hope Enterprises, including giving street children a daily breakfast to encourage attendance at free schooling provided after the meal.

At the same time as creating Ethiopiaid, Mr Reed also founded and provided investment to set up Womankind Worldwide



Alec Reed, founder of the Reed Group

## "Someone suggested we set up a virtual charity. I wanted to know what that meant"

in 1989 on International Women's Day, in order to help disadvantaged women in developing countries. This was merged in 2007 with another fundraising charity he had set up in 1996, Women at Risk, to combine forces for greater impact.

## Recognising great ideas

He continues to innovate in terms of charitable thinking. One of his latest ventures is The Big Give, the idea for which came out of a think tank he ran to discuss new ways of giving. "As the meeting was winding down one person said that we needed a virtual charity. I wanted to know what he meant."

The idea was translated into an online portal that allows individuals and philanthropists to search through the various charities on the site and pick the ones they are interested in helping. Mr Reed has also devised a matched funding scheme, where the Foundation matches the money the charities raise. Last November, he notes proudly, that resulted in £2 million being donated in 45 minutes.

Another strand of the Foundation's activities revolves around Mr Reed's passion for education and enterprise.

For example, the Foundation is the principle sponsor of the West London Academy, giving £2.5 million for the development of state-of-the-art buildings designed by noted architect Sir Norman Foster. The school, which specialises in sports and enterprise, is in the top 1% of schools nationally and is top in London for added value.

The latest Foundation venture is a pilot scheme which aims to explore the possibility of changing the pattern of 'school to welfare' to 'school to work' by funding Reed consultants to go into the Academy and help students find jobs.

"Some school children leave unqualified and unemployed and it can take a long time getting them into work. We will work with students to find a job," he explains. "Instead of being thrown out on the streets when they finish school, they have a fairly safe landing."

Where do all these ideas come from? "I don't sleep very well," Mr Reed laughs.

He goes on to conclude: "You can't determine how long your life is going to be. But you can determine how broad it can be. And it broadens life enormously to get involved in other areas."

# A day in the life of...

... **Dipti Sahdev**, Personal Advisor for Reed in Partnership's Pathways to Work programme



## What does your job involve?

I inform our customers about Pathways to Work, assess their barriers to work, refer them to various support services, match vacancies to realistic job goals, and support members in their job.

We help people on health related benefits, and so deal with sensitive issues – personal, physical, psychological – some severe, some manageable. We reassure and help motivate people who often worry

about finding work, about what happens if they fall out of work, and about whether they would definitely be better off working.

## What support is available for people with health problems?

We have the Condition Management Programme, which is a good in-house support system. The programme helps people to manage their physical or mental health condition. At times, we also direct customers to various organisations such as RNIB, Dering, or Eco-Actif, who specialise in particular health issues.

We use the 'Better Off Calculator' to make our customers aware of the benefits of working and to reassure them that they can ease into full time work in

a year's time, but still use their talents and skills.

## Do you support customers once they are in work?

I keep in touch with my customers for the first 26 weeks, assisting them with any issues they may have at work and building their confidence as they go along. Sometimes I help them break down daily activities into small manageable tasks so the change in lifestyle doesn't feel overwhelming.

## You helped 19 people into jobs in the last quarter. Who are you most proud of helping?

I feel that I may have made a big difference to one of my customers, Luke, who had no previous work experience, no qualifications and no luck with previous job applications. He was de-motivated and didn't really believe we could do anything for him. He started work a month after registering with us. Seeing this kind of positive transition in my

customers from their initial registration to their last appointment or when they start work is very rewarding.

## What is the most challenging part of your role?

Being non-judgemental and empathetic, particularly when people share the events in their lives and the medical conditions they have experienced. Also, I sometimes deal with customers who think they don't need to be on the programme and don't participate positively. Convincing them about the change going back to work will bring to their lives can be tough.

## What are your tips for helping customers on Pathways?

Each customer is different and support should be tailored to individual circumstances. I find that creating a positive relationship from the initial meeting, setting realistic goals and empowering people through the process always helps customers.

## ABOUT US

### Reed in Partnership changes people's lives for the better.

By creating tailored recruitment and retention solutions that meet employers' needs, we successfully move people into work. We know that everyone's situation is different and, because of this, our programmes provide individually tailored routes into employment.

**Our emphasis is on breaking down the barriers to work, giving people the skills, confidence and knowledge they need to find lasting employment.**

Our innovative approach consistently delivers excellent results. So far we've helped almost 90,000 people move from welfare into employment, and we've helped many more to gain the skills they need to enter and progress within the labour market.

**In partnership with Jobcentre Plus, specialist agencies and local partners, we find lasting solutions that change both lives and communities.**



## WORKING WITH US

If you are interested in working with Reed in Partnership or you know someone who needs our help, please go to [www.reedinpartnership.co.uk](http://www.reedinpartnership.co.uk) for details of your nearest office.



## CONTACT US

Reed in Partnership  
4th Floor, Anna House, 214-218 High Road,  
South Tottenham, London N15 4NP  
Tel: 020 8885 9896  
[www.reedinpartnership.co.uk](http://www.reedinpartnership.co.uk)