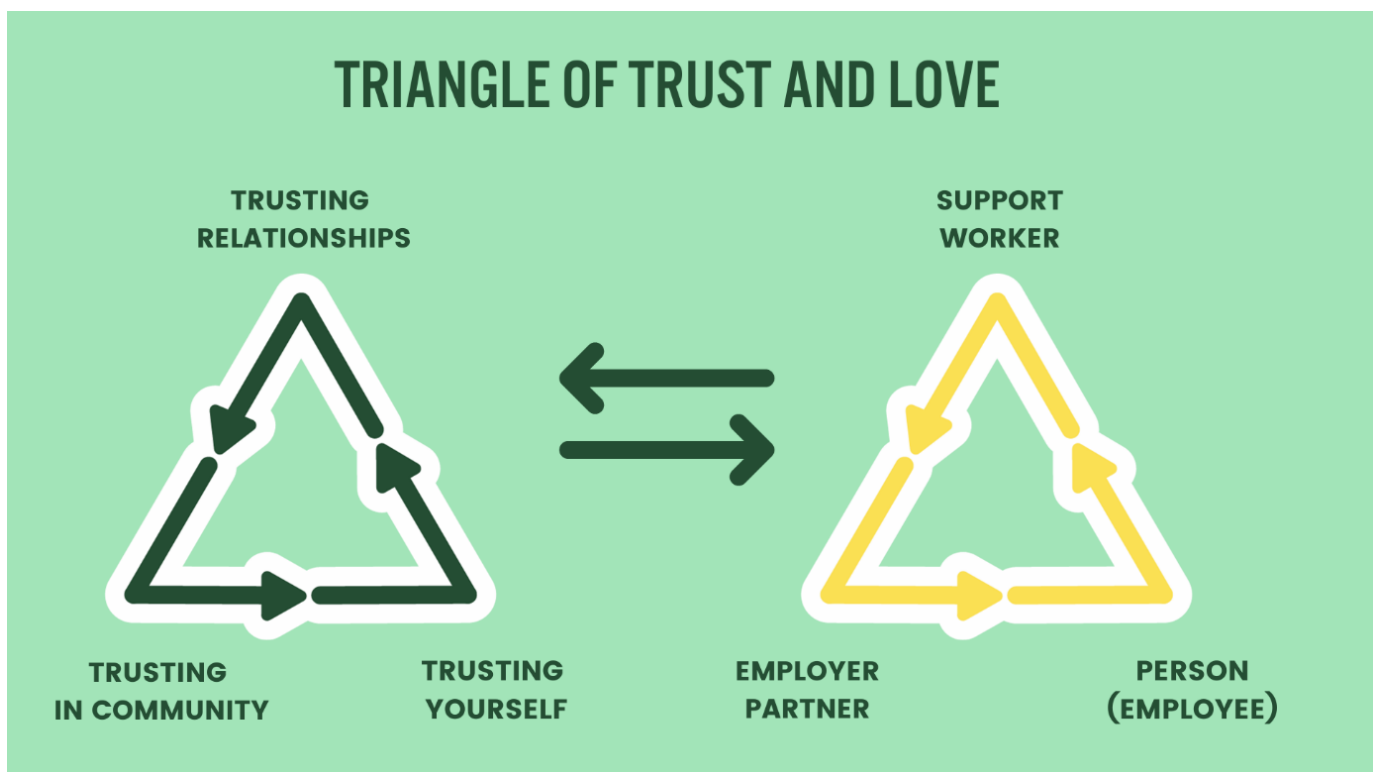


Jobs First – Two Years on Report

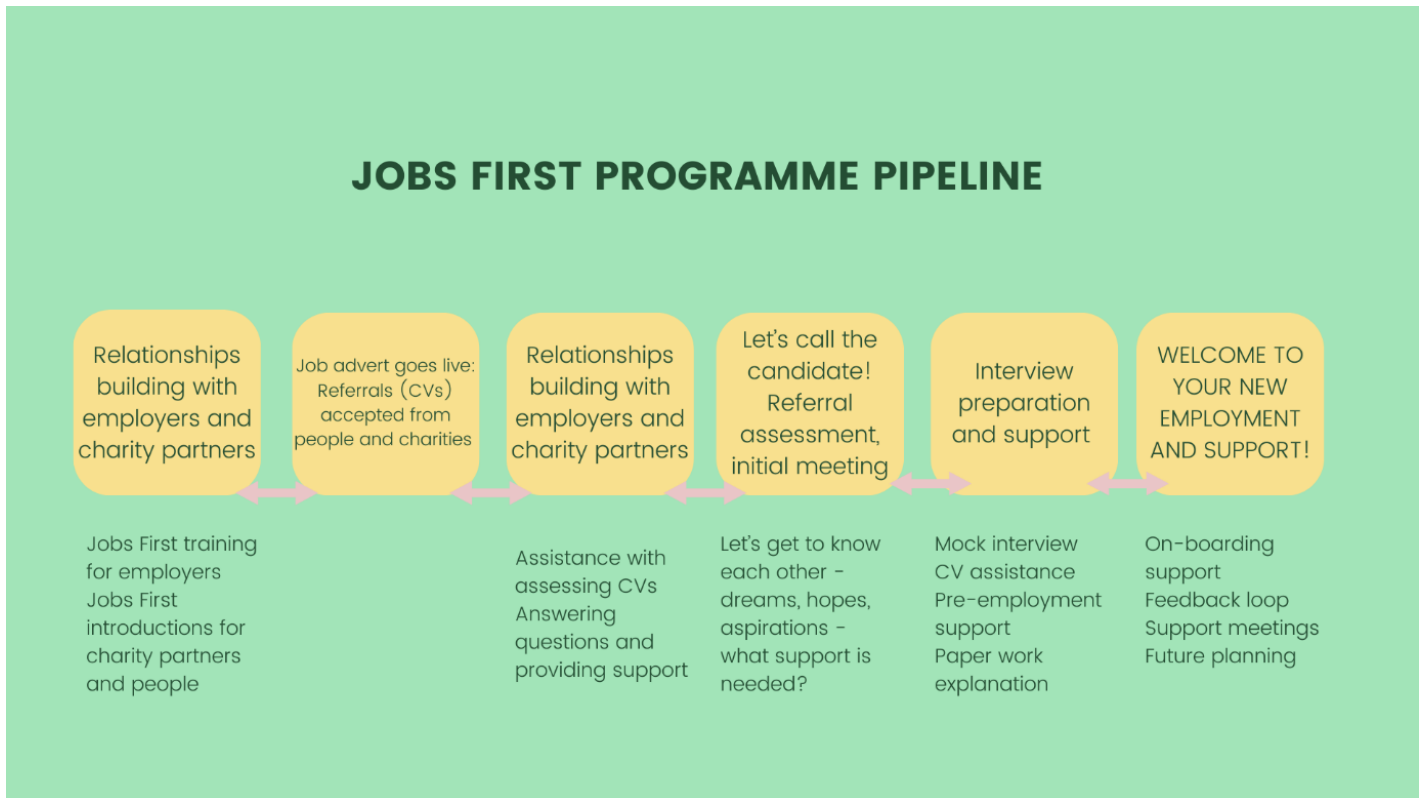
Jobs First programme – underlying principles

Jobs First aims to provide people in a situation of homelessness with real job opportunities and ongoing support. At Social Bite, we strongly believe that like housing, work is a fundamental human need and ‘good employment’, as well as a fair and constant source of income which delivers on personal and societal benefits, including better health and well-being, and integration into the community.

Our Jobs First programme is built on Social Bite’s Triangle of Trust and Love, the invisible elements that allow all of us to create supportive relationships with others. Those relationships that are based on trust are crucial in providing support. The triangle is based on the fundamentals of human development, where we look at the ability to build relationships between a person and care giver, and a person and the community. In the Jobs First model the employee is the person, the support worker is the care giver and employers and charities are the community. We realise that this is a very simplistic picture of the support process, however, what we are hoping for is to highlight the importance of relationship building and how crucial that is to bring all round change.



We have also looked at the Jobs First pipeline of building relationships with all parties involved. It is a recruitment pipeline that captures the milestones and additional support offered at each stage.



What has been achieved within the Jobs First programme over the last two years?

We know that the relationship between homelessness and employment is a complex one. Tim Gray, in his policy paper: *“Employment and homelessness in the context of the new economy from Covid-19”* states that *“all the evidence suggests that good work improves health and well-being for nearly everyone, but evidence also suggests that work for people on the fringes of the labour market is often difficult to obtain, and for those who find employment, it may still be insecure and poorly paid”*. People in a situation of homelessness very often belong to the people furthest away from the labour market. It is because they face multiple barriers in accessing employment. People facing homelessness might have limited work experience, a history of substance abuse, limited access to education, mental ill health, lack of bank account or identification documents. Alongside those issues, there are also many structural barriers such as lack of affordable housing, lack or limited public transport; societal barriers such as stigmatisation, prejudices and racism.

We know, based on evidence, that quality services that address those barriers, are needed. It is important to promote integration in line with a holistic approach and understanding of issues people might be facing.



Our Jobs First programme is based on the 'place and train' model. It offers real job opportunities alongside support to obtain work and sustain it. Support is provided around all areas of life and includes education around homelessness for the employers.

Since the start of the programme on 12th October 2021 till 12th October 2023 there have been:

- 48 people employed as part of the programme.
- 15 people currently employed.

- 9 people completed the programme (7 staying on with their current employer and 2 moving into jobs with a new employer).
- 24 people left the programme (main reasons: difficulty forming relationships, to focus on mental health and get support, criminal justice, recovery support, physical health and home office restrictions):
 - 5 of the employees were supported to find other work opportunities as part of the programme or work that was more suited to their needs outside the programme
 - 1 was supported to find a volunteering opportunity.
 - 1 is currently being supported to look at other opportunities with ad hoc support.
 - 6 people continued to get ad hoc support regarding their mental health from Social Bite
 - 4 were sign posted to our charity partners for further support.
 - 1 relocated due to Home Office constrictions and
 - 6 people disengaged with Social Bite.
 - 10 employers partners signed up to the programme.



- 89 charities in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and London heard about the programme.

Why work is important and should be meaningful?

Good employment, or 'Decent Work' to use the International Labour Organisation (ILO) terminology, is defined as *"work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men"*.

Work, in modern society, assists enhancing an individual's sense of belonging and provides financial means alongside becoming a socialising mechanism, a source of

social exchange and individual identity. Work can provide fulfilment and is a fundamental element of social integration, such as health, housing and interpersonal networks.

Our Jobs First programme offers assistance and support and takes individuals on the journey of gaining employment that will improve their situation. In line with the Triangle of Trust and Love, we have a person, a support worker, a charity and an employer that provide opportunities.

Employee – seeing the person.

Trusting relationships and support based on those relationships is crucial for the delivery of the Jobs First programme. We know that having a consistent approach and being there for the person assists the individual with overcoming barriers. We spoke to one of the Jobs First employees about the importance of building confidence and self-esteem through employment. David described the process of engaging in employment:

For me to connect to the Social Bite wasn't an easy something that came around so fast. First of all, I was homeless, and I happened to go to the UH, the Baptist Methodist Church where they have meetings where homeless people meet. And then there's this lady who got interested when I told her that I'm homeless due to the fact that there was a COVID situation that came around. And so from that instance she asked me a question and said if I find I'm willing to work. I said yes, and this this is when I happened to meet with a Jobs First Support Worker at Social Bite and other organisations as well. But the worker was one of the people that was actually advising on how to find jobs and things like that. So for me, Social Bite is not just a charity that is just helping people from the background of being homeless, but it's also an organisation that is helping people to find confidence that they can make it back again to their feet.

(...) You see, people don't understand that people who are homeless out there, they're still good people.

(...) When you're homeless, you're desperate and at some point you don't even know where your next meal is going to come from, not even knowing how you're gonna get through the day. And sometimes there's even know that there is help somewhere that you can get help, like for example benefits or anything... if you are a resident in the country or if you're not. And so at some point there's that desperateness that captures your mind that in the process of it, you fail to think straight.

But once, um, I started you know, there's a tendency of a person when you feel this is not where I should be. I can, I can rise up from this situation. I can do something better. And as you're doing that and then you find help. So this is how Social Bite comes in. So confidence, let me just let me say this, you can never build confidence on your own. You need someone to talk to.

(...) You cannot avoid it because anywhere any progress is still need someone to talk to you. So this is how I've built up the confidence of knowing that even though that was happened, I can still find people who can believe in me. That's one thing, someone believing in you, you can do it. It builds your confidence.

Overcoming barriers – importance of support and building partnerships.

Quality services are needed that address multiple barriers to work in a holistic way and assist people in situations of homelessness to move towards employment and to sustain work. Therefore, another crucial part of the Jobs First programme is trusting relationships with employers and charity partners. We strongly believe that to provide solutions, there needs to be close collaboration with partners.

We have learnt that to be able to deliver a successful programme, we had to build trusting relationships with employers and charity partners. The role of the programme coordinator and Development and Support worker is fundamental in the process, as they deliver training to employers and charity organisations. The long-term relationship with an employer assist in creating a working environment, where a person affected by homelessness can thrive. Another critical factor for an employer partner is that its leadership team is passionate about the programme and committed to the wider objective of supporting individuals experiencing homelessness to secure employment. Employer partners must be able to provide suitable job roles that are paid.

What some employers said about the Jobs First Programme:

"This wonderful programme has had a number of individuals work with us across both front and back of house roles allowing them opportunities to get back into work whilst in supportive environment. The Social Bite team on the ground are extremely patient, informative and engaging with the candidates but also the teams working with them day to day across the organisation".
Caroline Bacigalupo
Head of Operations, Heritage Portfolio

"Change is inevitable (...), if you do not support the candidates in changing direction then we are not doing our role for the candidates. (...) We help create a sense of wellbeing, involvement, support network which helps contribute to the team feeling valued & welcomed (...) coaching them to gain new skills not just in the workplace but external day to day life skills too."
Melanie Robertson
Mitchells and Butlers

"This process challenges everyone involved in many ways. I've found it's challenged my team in terms of how they integrate new people but also challenged them to ask questions to make sure the new members are doing ok which in this day and age is very important. There are so many high points going through this process, too many to mention. The most important one is the pride this whole process gives you in seeing the next stage in the person's development and see them gain confidence and grow throughout the process".
Grant Abercrombie
Head Chef, BaxterStorey

When it comes to working with charity partners a key element is providing clear information about the Jobs First programme and establishing pathways for referrals.

When a job opportunity arises the Programme Co-ordinator for Jobs First gets in touch with a charity organisation to send a job description to see if anybody is interested in the programme and gaining employment. At this stage the candidate would be required to send a CV to Social Bite.

Should the candidate be unsuccessful at the CV or Interview stage, but all parties feel they would benefit from further involvement with Social Bite, we would look at getting people involved in workshops around self-confidence and employment to equip them with the skills needed to progress. An additional training programme with Social Bite is also discussed with individuals at this point. This assists individuals to move forward and give them a springboard to becoming involved in the Jobs First programme.

Partnerships are crucial to the work Social Bite is carrying out and we asked some of the charity partners to reflect on two years of working with us.

What some charity partners said about the Jobs First Programme:

"If someone is referred for one vacancy and it is not suitable, they can still be offered suitable support to access future job vacancies. (...) I would recommend the programme to other charities. It is a great opportunity to help someone seeking employment who would also benefit from extra support and guidance. The referral process is simple yet effective, the vacancies are varied, and communication has been really effective".

Jessica Cadd
Lead Worker, Coaching, Crisis

"It has been great to refer clients to the Jobs First Programme knowing that the extra support was there for them. It meant that once the person secured the job, I was able to pass on the responsibility of continuing care to Social Bite".

Marina D'Arco
Skills and Opportunities Coordinator
The Connection at St. Martin's

"The Jobs First Programme focuses on a particular demographic and further barriers to gain employment (...) The benefit our participants have gained is the support of a third-party organisation that we can signpost them to for extra support, taking away the worry and stress they have been facing for any length of time. Every participant is unique and has individual needs and with the experience of the Social Bite team, they are the thought and first point of contact when we identify participants that come under the homeless criteria".

Jonathan Active
Project Leader, The Lennox Partnership

Jobs First – two years journey - what have we learnt?

Monitoring and evaluation tools are an important part of the Jobs First programme for understanding and improving the performance of the project. Tools that we use provide information on the progress, outcomes and impacts of the programme and allow learning and improvements. Monitoring and evaluation also enhance transparency and accountability, alongside the ability to share lessons and best practice. It is an ongoing process.

Main tools used to collect various data are:

- Assessments
- Case notes
- Support plans
- Feedback loops that assist with reinforcing strengths, and assessment of areas that can be improved at work
- Feedback from employers.




Feedback from employees – main points and learnings

The first few weeks and months of employment are important for various reasons. Employees can aim to take ownership of their new role and try to do their best work. Employers, on the other hand, have an opportunity to set up clear expectations, teach about the company's culture and strategy alongside making plans with the new employees regarding their career path.

In terms of the Jobs First programme, the first few months, are crucial for positive relationship building. Looking at barriers that people might face through a situation of homelessness, we set up a tool that allows us to build on a person's strengths and enables us to address issues in a quick and efficient way, aiming to prepare solutions to address the situation. During the probation period, we use a **feedback loop**. This is a tool that uses traffic light scoring and allows us to discuss the following areas:

- Motivation shown in a workplace.
- Personal presentation.
- Communication skills.
- Performance of duties.
- Adhering to professional boundaries

288 feedback loop meetings were conducted between 12th October 2021 and 12th October 2023. The table below illustrates what needed to be improved and in what areas there were no concerns.

	Motivation	Personal presentation	Communication skills	Performance	Professional boundaries
	2.1% reported as area of concern	n/a	1.4% reported as area of concern	1% reported as area of concern	2.1% reported as area of concern
	6.3% reported area for improvement	6.9% reported this as area for improvement	14.6% reported this as area for improvement	11.8% reported this as area for improvement	3.8% reported this as area for improvement
	91.6% - people were motivated	93.1% - no concerns in this area	84% - no concerns in this area	87.2% - no concerns in this area	94.1% - no concerns in this area

We strive to constantly improve the support we provide, therefore, when someone leaves the programme, we ask them to participate in evaluation. The purpose of the feedback is to help us to reflect and improve the Jobs First process. This is not an obligatory process; however, we encourage people to provide as detailed feedback as possible.

20 evaluation forms have been collected. We knew that the majority of vacancies were in the hospitality industry, some in cleaning, food production or working as a parking attendant.

What we have learnt so far is that people value preparation for the interview and support offered by the Development and Support Worker during the interview. Consistency, regularity and kindness were some of the highlights of the support delivered by Social Bite.

When it comes to employers, Jobs First employees highlighted how useful the induction shadowing and mentoring opportunities were for them to feel they can carry out the role. Welcoming and strong teams were identified as providing a good environment to work with. At the same time lack of ability to work with conflict was highlighted as an additional obstacle to sustain employment.

Jobs First employees reported that for them improvement in confidence and knowing their own skills was one of the main outcomes. This was followed by improving communication skills alongside financial and housing situations. People said that they are more likely to stand up for themselves and gained much better understanding of the mental health issue they were facing.

Due to feedback about interview preparation, we have developed the Skills Lab and will be looking at possibilities to implement additional changes.

Feedback from employers – main points and learnings

Social Bite meets with employers every 6 months and at the end of the Jobs First programme to seek feedback, evaluate the approach, implement changes that are recommended and lead to the programme improvement and development.

Employers reported that participation in the Jobs First programme overall has been positive. The main themes identified as strong elements of the programme were:

- honest and open communication that leads to building trusting relationships and enables solutions of potential conflict;
- Social Bite's training on issue of homelessness – majority of the employers reported that this led to strengthening internal teams and a better understanding of the issue of homelessness;
- Support provided to the employer outside of the main training and feedback.

Improvements implemented related to the training delivery and teams' engagement. Social Bite's team tested different ways of training delivery, including video sessions, however, it was reported that face to face sessions provide an opportunity for better engagement and asking questions directly, and when not possible online sessions.

One of the main challenges is what might affect the Jobs First employee outside work, and in majority these have been related to mental ill health.

Social Bite is committed to seeking feedback from employers and working on the development of the programme.

Developments during the Jobs First programme delivery

The Jobs First programme aims to offer real job opportunities to people and provide support to individuals and employers. Development and Support workers assist with the recruitment process and offer support to those who might have been unsuccessful in securing employment.

Initial stage of building a positive relationship with a person and planning their support starts with an assessment process. We know that a worker's ability to ask questions and assist in creating a safe space to discuss areas of their lives is hugely important.

Therefore, this year, we undertook a review of the assessment process, led by a clinical psychologist, our internal counsellor and senior workers before gathering feedback from all of our impact team. As an outcome of that review assessment questions have been simplified with more emphasis on the relational aspect of support and gaining a better understanding of a person's world view. We have developed assessment of the referrals that lead to improved candidates' suitability for the job and support.

As part of the support provision, we have learnt that additional preparation for work might be beneficial for some individuals and as a result in the second year of the programme delivery the team developed Skills Lab. This is a four-week course that aims to empower people who come from a background of homelessness to gain the confidence and skills needed to successfully apply for a job. Delivered by Development and Support workers from Social Bite's Social Impact Team, this person-centred course is designed to build self-esteem as well as working on practical elements like CV writing and interview skills.

1. Week 1 – Building Confidence
2. Week 2 – Tackling Nerves
3. Week 3 – CV Writing
4. Week 4 – Interview Preparation

The course was delivered in Edinburgh, where six people were referred into the programme with four people taking part in the sessions. One dropped out due to successfully getting a job. One did not answer when we attempted to contact them.

Social Bite will also deliver Skills Lab in Glasgow.

Summary

Social Bite has successfully run the Jobs First programme in partnership with several leading sector employers. Over the last two years, this has created job opportunities for people experiencing homeless to access supported employment. Based on the need of unsuccessful candidates, we have developed Skills Lab to assist people who feel they need additional support to go back to the labour market.

Social Bite will continue to source employers from other sectors to provide as many diverse job opportunities as possible. We will also continue to seek regular feedback on the partnerships development and from people we support to further develop and improve the programme.

We are currently working on a proposition to evaluate the programme and learn how the delivery can be improved. Our hopes for the programme are as follows:

- To build on our existing employer partners
- To have variety of employment opportunities
- To build on our existing referral partners
- For the programme to become common practice within the employment sector
- To continue to support those who have experienced homelessness.