

## **AstraZeneca and Tomorrow's People: How working together makes good business sense and supports the community**

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*Stephen Rumford, Brixham site Manager, AstraZeneca*

### **Sustaining local communities**

The social responsibility policies of AstraZeneca, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, are aimed at ensuring that, by achieving sustainable development, it benefits communities where its business is based.

The company's commitment to social sustainability is clearly demonstrated through its Brixham-based environmental laboratory. By funding the work of Tomorrow's People locally since 1998, it has taken a lead role in tackling local unemployment. By supporting the charity's Corporate Workroute programme it is also helping other Brixham businesses recruit trained and committed staff who were previously out of work.

### **How the partnership works**

Funding provided by AstraZeneca enables a specialist Tomorrow's People employment adviser to provide free, one-to-one career guidance to the local unemployed, including confidence building, help with CVs and job interview techniques.

In addition to substantial funding, AstraZeneca has also supplied the charity with office space and IT equipment and a full range of support services. This base enables the Tomorrow's People employment adviser, Jack Oakden, to provide advice and support to help long-term unemployed Brixham residents back to work. These trained and motivated job seekers are then introduced to local employers and an aftercare service is available to support both parties.

### **Project Success**

AstraZeneca's dedication to improving work prospects within the local community has benefited a great many individuals, some of whom have found work within the laboratory. Since the partnership began, Tomorrow's People has helped over 1500 people, giving the type of support that had never previously been available.

Stephen Rumford, Site Manager at AstraZeneca in Brixham, said: “The Tomorrow's People programme has become a key factor in the process of helping people in the town to enter or return to employment. AstraZeneca is a significant employer in Brixham, but we recognise the need to give something back to an area where employment levels are low.

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“Brixham depends heavily on fishing and tourism and there are no large scale businesses. Employment lies within the area’s many small enterprises, and it is the ability of the employment adviser, Jack Oakden to understand the town and its businesses that has contributed so much to the success of the project here.”

## **Support for innovation**

In 2005, AstraZeneca generously allowed the Tomorrow’s People employment adviser to spend half the working week extending these services to GPs’ surgeries in Torbay and Newton Abbot. This groundbreaking scheme helps patients move off the sickness register and into work.

This initiative was developed in response to the fact that many people receiving Incapacity Benefit and Disability Allowance are willing and able to work, however, some need extra help in navigating their way back into employment.

The employment adviser provides specialist, one-to-one advice to patients who are out of work for health reasons. Thanks to the support of AstraZeneca, the innovative service is available in doctors’ surgeries across South Devon - in Brixham, Newton Abbot and Paignton, and at the Pain Management Unit at Torbay Hospital.

David Sayer, Operations Manager for Tomorrow’s People in Devon said: “AstraZeneca’s support has been instrumental in sustaining the Tomorrow’s People operation in Brixham. In addition, the company’s support in our efforts to provide outreach support within GPs surgeries has been invaluable. This demonstrates new levels of co-operation and understanding between Tomorrow’s People and AstraZeneca.”

## **A successful model**

The GP employment adviser scheme has been so successful that it is now available across the UK. The Government recently showed its support for this type of project, announcing plans to pilot employment adviser support within GPs’ surgeries.

Tomorrow’s People employment adviser, Jack Oakden, said: “Whilst we support this proposal, our own experience from offering a similar service for the last five years shows that patients prefer to visit an independent expert on site without fears of the stigma that can be attached to attending a job centre or a more formal service that they may find threatening.

“A key strength of our own service is the independence of our advisers from Government. If clients feel they are being scrutinised or judged they will not seek help. On top of this, our independence also means we are able to devote more time to each patient, which is vital to individuals who may have considerable barriers to overcome before they can return to work.”

## **Close relationships**

The success of the relationship between Tomorrow’s People and AstraZeneca owes much to the personal support shown by Steve Rumford, the Brixham laboratory’s site manager. Tomorrow’s People employment adviser, Jack Oakden explains: “Over the last

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eight years the company has given its full support, not only in funding terms, but also in genuine care for the community. Without this backing we would not have been able to carry out our work and hundreds of local people would have been left without vital help and support.”

Working with Tomorrow's People not only makes good business sense but also helps you to benefit your local community. Without the support of businesses like AstraZeneca, thousands of people would not have received help back into work and the charity hopes that it can develop more relationships with businesses across the UK, to help communities in need. Many companies, particularly smaller ones, are in areas of high unemployment yet have unfilled vacancies. Tomorrow's People can provide a fast and efficient recruitment service by offering prepared, trained and job-ready local candidates.

To find out more, please contact Steve Swan, Tomorrow's People National Sales and Development Manager by emailing [sswan@tomorrows-people.co.uk](mailto:sswan@tomorrows-people.co.uk) or telephone 0238 089 9915

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