

How the **BSS**  
information helpdesk  
was set up quickly  
and on a tight budget

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Time and budgets were very tight when advice helpline specialist BSS had three months to launch a 100-strong advice centre, which is why Manpower came up with a dedicated solution to specifically suit the company's needs.

### The **challenge**

After winning a new contract at the beginning of January, Broadcasting Support Services (BSS), an independent charity which provides information to the public, had to move very quickly.

A new information helpline, **learndirect**, had to be up and running in Leicester by the beginning of April. The service was to run in parallel with BSS's existing **learndirect** operation in Manchester.

Unlike typical call centre operatives, staff working on the information line needed a good knowledge of the education system. They needed to provide information and advice on careers, learning and education opportunities, and be able to answer a wide range of questions.

Staff with the right combination of specialist skills needed to be sought fast – and, most challenging of all, within a limited budget.

# Meeting the challenge

## The solution

BSS was confident in Manpower's abilities to resource the 100 telephone advisors. "Manpower's services are wider than I'd thought - I'd originally contacted them regarding IT help, but was very impressed with what they could offer us," says Rosemary Sheard, HR Director for BSS.

To accommodate BSS's budget, Manpower took the highly unusual step of devising an innovative solution, specifically for the company. Instead of the full recruitment programme, Manpower looked at how the two companies could work in partnership to reduce costs.

The interviewing and actual recruitment was handled by BSS. Manpower advertised locally, pre-screened all candidates over the telephone, co-ordinated application forms, conducted full telephone interviews, shortlisted candidates with the right qualifications and scheduled interviews on behalf of BSS.

The project was shared between Manpower's Leicester Technical branch and its National Recruitment Centre in Eastleigh, which provides candidates with one central telephone number to maximise response.

## The benefits

By offering a partial recruitment service Manpower was able to give the company a significantly reduced rate per candidate taken on board. This enabled BSS to stay well within its budget.

As BSS's headquarters are in London, Manpower's local knowledge of Leicester was a major bonus, and resulted in further cost savings. For one thing, Manpower came up with the idea for the BSS interviews to take place at Leicester's Rugby Club home ground, Tigers Ground.

"None of us had any local knowledge," explains Rosemary. "Manpower had personal experience so they could advise us on a number of areas, right down to which newspapers were best for advertising."

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The overall calibre of staff has been high. Says Rosemary: "It's not a job you can learn elsewhere, so there was a lot to take in during our induction. But the staff had the confidence, ability and willingness to learn. They have proved successful and retention has been good."

**Manpower PLC, International House  
66 Chiltern Street, London W1M 1PR  
Tel: 020 7224 6688**

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