

## **Bridge to Employment Case Study**

### **The Company - Mercer Consulting, Outsourcing, Investments.**

Mercer is a leading global provider of consulting, outsourcing and investment services, with more than 25,000 clients worldwide. In the area of retirement benefits, they work with clients to design and optimise their retirement plans and advise on governance and the management of associated financial risks. Mercer's Retirement Service Centre (RSC) based in Belfast specialises in the production of actuarial valuations and calculations for their clients.

### **The Challenge**

Mercer required additional 'Retirement Analysts' for their Belfast Retirement Centre to help cope with the increased demand for their valuation services within Europe. The Retirement Analysts required would perform individual calculations associated with defined benefit pension schemes.

There would also be scope for the successful trainees to ultimately develop into managers via a process of training and self development.

### **The Strategy**

A meeting was arranged with a Bridge to Employment Project Manager and in conjunction with Mercer a training programme was developed to identify highly skilled graduates and experienced financial services professionals.

The one week intensive training course based at Mercer in Clarendon House, 23 Clarendon Road, Belfast BT1 3BG, was provided under the Department's Bridge to Employment programme which equips unemployed people with the skills to compete for new job opportunities.

The training course was designed to provide the trainees with a sound understanding of the pensions industry and the role of a Retirement Analyst.

The course topics included:

- Company pension schemes;
- The UK pensions industry;
- UK pension legislation;
- The calculation of member benefits;
- Company pension scheme valuations and associated calculations

## **Feedback from Company**

*"BTE provided Mercer with a unique opportunity to identify and select top performing local graduates with financial and mathematical degrees as well as excellent candidates from outside of these traditional academic backgrounds. They were on hand throughout the recruitment process, providing vital support for the training required to equip these graduates with the skills necessary to transition into the actuarial industry. Mercer has reaped benefits from using BTE and we hope to continue to do so."*