

Alarm over big rise in number of job-seekers

BY GABY WINE

► THE HEAD of an employment charity that supports the Jewish community has expressed concern over the sharp rise in clients due to job losses and the increasing cost of living.

Debbie Lebrecht, the CEO of Work Avenue, told the JC that redundancies had "hit hard" in 2024 and that more families were facing financial struggles.

In 2024, Work Avenue reported a 26 per cent increase in use of its services from the previous year, with nearly 4,000 people seeking employment and business support.

Figures were reflected in the charity's annual New Year, New Career event, which saw more than 90 job-seekers come through the door – a significantly higher number than in previous years, according to the charity.

Attendees, who ranged in age and synagogue affiliation, heard from motivational speakers, listened to panel discussions and attended interactive workshops at the offices of event sponsors Patron Capital.

There was also the opportunity to find out about live vacancies and sign up for training courses.

Lebrecht said: "The sharp rise in numbers at this annual event echoes what we have seen in all areas of our work. Redundancies and job losses hit hard in 2024, along with the greater financial need many families have due to rising costs."

"What this inspiring day demon-



Good point: Nicky Simmons, founder of London Health Consult, shares some inspiration at the Work Avenue event. Inset left: Work Avenue CEO Debbie Lebrecht

strated is that the support is there to help people build confidence, find the right vacancy, prepare for interview and land their dream job."

The day began with a panel discussion on "what it takes to succeed" chaired by Charlotte Collins – the editor-in-chief of *SheerLuxe* fashion magazine.

She advised: "The people who get through the door, and rise fastest, aren't necessarily those with the right skills or ability – but the people with the best attitude, who go beyond the nine-to-five and show a true passion

for the job and the company."

Two motivational sessions were led by Nicky Simmons, founder of London Health Consult, and Dr Danny McGuigan, director of The Business Development Centre, who used their own personal stories of overcoming adversity to help inspire their audience.

Simmons advised: "Life is unbelievably wonderful, but also unbelievably complicated. It's OK to not be OK. Don't be afraid to ask for help."

The mix of speakers on the day – including Keith Breslauer, managing partner at Patron Capital; Amanda

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Reuben, a recruitment consultant; Neil Taub, co-founder of Zoomdoc; and Eszter Bobvos, head of people and culture at JW3 – gave an insight into what employers and recruiters looked for across a range of sectors.

Lebrecht said afterwards: "From those seeking entry-level jobs to those

pursuing senior executive roles, there was a strong sense of unity at New Year, New Career, with everyone sharing the same struggles but also the same determination."

She said the feedback from attendees had been highly positive, with one participant saying: "Looking for a job can be very lonely. To be with so many talented people, all in the same boat, was comforting and gave me hope."

Another said: "It's been a long time since I had to look for work, so to hear about what employers and recruiters look for – along with what they certainly don't want – will greatly help me."