



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL NORTH WEST



Leading learning and skills

CASE STUDY PROFORMA FOR 2007-13 PROJECTS

PART A: CONTACT DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Provider Name | St. Antony's Centre |
| Contract Number | NW 240 101 |
| Tender Specification Ref | NWES12 |
| Tender Specification Title | Pathway to NVQ Level 2 |
| Contact Name | Paul Callaghan |
| Position in Organisation | Contracts Manager |
| Telephone Number | 0161 848 9173 |
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PART B: PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Participant's Name | Beverley Scott |
| Date of Birth | Details withheld at candidate's request |

Project Overview (*Approximately 100 words*)

Please provide a description of the project, identify what it is the project is delivering, who to (target group) and where (geographic coverage).

The Bridge Scheme provides learning support and vocational skills development to help employees with low or outdated skills achieve NVQ level 1 in Information Technology (ITQ). The project is open to workers in Greater Manchester who do not hold NVQ 2 and currently supports learners in a number of companies, employers and industrial sectors across the sub-region. Delivery of training and candidate assessment is mainly conducted in the workplace to encourage learner engagement and retention. The wider purpose of the project is to help learners gain valuable employment skills and accreditation as the basis for progression to higher level learning and qualification.

Participant's Background and Circumstances (*Approximately 250 words*)

Please give details of the participant's background and circumstances prior to joining the project. Include details of the individual's employment status and previous work experience, skills and qualifications obtained prior to commencing on the project, any health issues, care responsibilities or particular barriers faced by the individual.

The participant has worked as a Learning Mentor and Parent Liaison Officer at Kings Road Primary School in Firwood for 6 years and her previous employment background was in residential social work. Prior to enrolling on the NVQ, Beverley had no IT qualifications, only a

basic level of IT skills and was not confident in the use of a keyboard and computer. As Beverley has childcare commitments, further barriers to her participation were around the accessibility and timing of learning support. In this context, the fact that tutors deliver the course in the school premises directly following the end of the school day means that Beverley has been able to access learning without having to take time off work and remain on the course without her participation impacting adversely on her care responsibilities. In order to help Beverley become more familiar and confident in her use of IT no time constraints were set around the duration of the course, thereby allowing Beverley the flexibility and scope to learn and progress at a pace comfortable to her.

Participant’s Achievements *(Approximately 250 words)*
Please describe how the achievements of the participant whilst on the project. Include details of the progress made, skills and qualifications achieved, progress in gaining employment or work experience and barriers which have been overcome. Where activity is ongoing provide an update on progress.

The candidate is currently on programme and following assessment is expected to achieve NVQ 1 around the end of March, early April. Specific skills she has acquired as a direct result of the course include competence in producing documents in different software such as Word, use of the internet to search for and access information and sending e-mails. The greater knowledge and self-assurance this has given Beverley has helped her become more confident and effective in her work-based and personal use of IT, to the extent that Beverley is considering progressing to a higher-level qualification in order to further develop and enhance her skills.

The style and content of programme delivery have been important elements in helping Beverley progress towards the ITQ and achieve her learning goals. Beverley emphasised the quality and clarity of learning materials and guidance as well as the one-to-one tuition and support from tutors as being particularly beneficial in developing both her practical IT skills and greater confidence in the use of equipment and software. Being able to contact tutors directly outside of scheduled learning hours for further information, advice and instruction around the use of IT and completion of pieces of work was also especially helpful for Beverley.

PART C: PROJECT CASE STUDY

Focus of Case Study
Please specify the focus of the case study ie Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities, Partnership Working/Complementarity etc
Partnership Working

Please provide a description of **approximately 250 words** for each of the following:

Project Overview *(Approximately 250 words)*
Please provide a description of the project, identify what it is the project is delivering, who to (target group) and where (geographic coverage).

The Bridge Scheme is part of an innovative approach to engaging employers in the learning agenda in order to support employees with low or outdated skills to access tailored programmes of personal development and learning. The aim of these programmes is to i) help workers acquire economically valuable generic and vocational skills, ii) use these skills as the basis for progression to higher level learning and qualifications and iii) improve the skills base of the workforce and the

productivity of their employers in support of regional economic and skills priorities. The project is delivering NVQ 1 in IT (ITQ) to learners who live or work in Greater Manchester and currently do not hold NVQ 2 or equivalent. Learning activity is focused on a number of priority sectors including Retail, Warehousing and Distribution, Engineering and Manufacturing and the public sector. Learning is arranged flexibly and responsively around employee shift patterns and based on Learning Agreements secured in negotiation with employers. The project also makes use of a mobile Learning Bus to offer quick, on-site assessment of learning needs and taster IT sessions to galvanise awareness of and participation in the ITQ. Following an initial diagnostic assessment of individual learner needs and enrolment on the ITQ, tuition is conducted in small learner groups, with activity undertaken alongside peers in the workplace to ensure ease and familiarity for workers with low skills who are apprehensive about learning.

Summary/Details of Sustainable Development/Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities/ Innovative Activities/Best Practice etc (Approximately 250 words)

Provide details of how the project is addressing Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities, Health, Complementarity, innovative activities/best practice activities. Include details of how you may be disseminating good practice/innovation.

The project is unique in that the Bridge Scheme training team is supported to engage employers, recruit learners and develop appropriate learning provision with the help of colleagues working on a Union Learning funded Reach Out project and a constituent network of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in various workplaces across the sub-region. The ULRs work to promote the benefits of learning to their colleagues on the shop floor and undertake surveys to identify skills gaps. Through the Reach Out officers' daily working links with the ULRs, the Bridge scheme trainers are able to respond quickly and effectively in identifying and assessing eligible candidates who would benefit from securing a nationally recognised qualification and enrolling them on an appropriate course accredited with City & Guilds or the Open College Network. Importantly, the bulk of tuition, observation and assessment takes place at work, making learning more accessible for employees and minimising the impact on the employer. At the same time, the Reach Out officers and training team work closely with employers to emphasise the improvements in efficiency and productivity to be gained from investment in learning, in the process securing learning agreements and the development of new learning facilities/centres on site. Presentation ceremonies at the workplace and a quarterly Reach Out newsletter distributed across the region and national union networks are some of the main vehicles for disseminating the innovative partnership approach between the learning provider (St. Antony's Centre) and the union (GMB).

Demonstrating Success (Approximately 250 words)

Demonstrate how successful this project is in terms of delivering its objectives and achieving its outputs and outcomes. If the project is still running identify success to date.

The Bridge Scheme has been in operation since August 2008 and aims to support 326 people into learning by December 31st 2010, 196 of whom are profiled to achieve NVQ1. To date 27 learners from 5 different employers in Greater Manchester have enrolled on the ITQ and completed an Individual Learning Plan detailing their learning aims and goals. 20 current and new learners are expected to achieve NVQ1 by the end of March 2009. 2 candidates have withdrawn from the course but all candidates have completed 8 weeks in learning in line with contracted targets and outcomes. The high rate of retention is due in part to the close working relationship established with learners through the efforts of the ULRs, the provision of accessible and flexible learning and assessment in the workplace and the low tutor to learner ratio which allows for closer support for people who may not have undertaken learning for many years. Although the project is in its relatively early stages, a number of candidates undertaking the NVQ 1 have already expressed their interest in registering for Level 2. This is significant in terms of the wider project objective to progress learners to higher level provision and again reflects well on the effectiveness of the

delivery model for learning in encouraging non-traditional learners to overcome their fears and barriers and achieve nationally recognised qualifications.

Demonstrating Impact (*Approximately 250 words*)

Demonstrate the real impact that this project has made for those employers/beneficiaries that have been supported by the project

The Bridge Scheme has only been in operation since August 2008 and to date therefore no candidates have achieved their NVQ in IT although around 10 learners are expected to be assessed within the next few weeks. Nevertheless, from learner feedback it is clear that candidates have already benefited from an increase in confidence, aspirations and skills, as evidenced by the number of learners keen to stay in learning and progress to higher level IT and other provision. Some learners have commented that delivery on site and the style of tutoring based on close support from trainers and colleagues has made it much easier for them to participate in learning and develop new skills which they find beneficial both in terms of their work and their personal life. Learners also recognise the added value in the opportunity to obtain valuable transferable skills and qualifications during a period of economic downturn. An on-going survey of employers supported through the project has produced a consistently high level of satisfaction with the learning service provided. In particular, employers have commented positively on the flexibility of learning delivery to meet both individual and company needs, the quality and consistency of learning provision and the value to the company in terms of efficiency and productivity as a result of the new skills workers are acquiring.

PART D – DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- The information contained within this proforma is true and accurate. Yes
- Where a participant has been identified as a case study that they have consented to be a case study, that they are aware that the information contained in this proforma may be used by the LSC for publicity purposes and that they may be required to have publicity photographs taken.
- Where a project case study has been provided that my organisation consents to the use of this information for publicity purposes and to taking of publicity photographs. Yes

Please indicate Yes or No in the space provided next to each bullet point.

Print Name: Paul Callaghan

Position within Organisation: Contracts Manager