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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
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PART B: PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY

Participant's Name	Simon Brown
Date of Birth	23/07/71

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The Bridge Scheme provides learning support and vocational skills development to help employees with low or outdated skills achieve NVQ level 1 in Information Technology (ITQ).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.

After leaving school in 1987 Simon started on a youth training scheme in painting and decorating. He stayed on the scheme for 18 months and learned a lot of vocational skills but did not complete the course or gain a qualification as he left the scheme to take up full time employment. For the

next two years he worked for various different employers doing a range of jobs, before starting work for a family run business where he spent the next 12 years. Simon has been employed in the warehousing section of Wincanton Distribution in Wigan since 2001 and it is in this job that he has had to develop his familiarity with IT through use of the company's electronic warehouse management system. This encouraged Simon's interest in computers and since starting at Wincanton he has sought to develop his IT skills through use of a personal PC. Having never received any formal training through the company in the use of its bespoke software or ICT in general Simon was keen to enrol on a formal qualification in order to improve his skills and techniques in the use of computers for both personal and professional reasons. Having been advised by a Union Learning Representative of the opportunity to participate in a work-based ICT learning programme run by St. Antony's Centre, Simon started the course in September 2008 and has enjoyed the chance to access a free course of learning in his place of work in order to develop his knowledge and skills and achieve his first accredited qualification.

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.

Simon is currently on programme and following assessment is expected to achieve NVQ 1 around the end of May/early June. Simon feels that the support of the course tutors and the opportunity to learn at his own pace in the company of colleagues have boosted his confidence greatly with regards to his ICT skills, as he now finds that he is far less hesitant in using the computer and no longer needs to second guess whether he is choosing the correct key function to perform the tasks he wants to complete.

Alongside new skills in the use of both his employer's bespoke system and standard office software Simon has also achieved a greater knowledge and understanding of computers through the chance to speak directly with tutors and the flexible way both the learning activities and information, advice and guidance have been provided. Simon has developed greater self-assurance in using computers to produce documents, search the internet and send and receive e-mails and has gained further confidence from progressing towards the achievement of his first qualification.

Another significant outcome for Simon is that the method and content of course delivery have increased his awareness of the range of learning provision available and his enthusiasm to carry on learning in the future with a view to gaining further qualifications and achieving higher level skills, which in turn may result in him venturing into new areas of employment.

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 78 learners from 10 different employers in Greater Manchester have enrolled on the ITQ and completed an Individual Learning Plan detailing their learning aims and goals. 11 learners to date have achieved

NVQ1 with a further 20 forecast to complete by the end of January 2010. 2 ineligible candidates have been withdrawn from the course and 8 learners have withdrawn from participation following a change in shift patterns and/or personal circumstances. The majority of candidates will have completed 8 weeks in learning by the end of December 2009 in line with contracted targets and outcomes. The effective 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. As delivery of the project has progressed, 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 been in operation since August 2008 and to date 11 candidates have achieved their NVQ in IT while around 20 learners are expected to be assessed within the next few weeks. 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