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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

<b>Provider Name</b>	St. Antony's Centre
<b>Contract Number</b>	NW 240 101
<b>Tender Specification Ref</b>	NWES12
<b>Tender Specification Title</b>	Pathway to NVQ Level 2
<b>Contact Name</b>	Paul Callaghan
<b>Position in Organisation</b>	Contracts Manager
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<b>Email Address</b>	pcallaghan@stantonyscentre.org.uk

#### PART B: PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY

<b>Participant's Name</b>	Susan Stapley
<b>Date of Birth</b>	08/01/55

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The Bridge Scheme provides learning support and vocational skills development to help employees with low or outdated skills achieve NVQ level 1 in Information Technology (ITQ).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

For the last 23 years Susan has worked as a teaching assistant and nursery nurse at St. John Vianney School in Firwood, Manchester. Before this she had worked as receptionist at a doctor's practice having left school with no formal qualifications. Around 10 years ago Susan had

undertaken a basic introductory course in Information Technology as part of her work but other than this course she had not participated in any structured learning prior to starting on the Bridge Scheme. The main reason for this was that Susan had on-going childcare commitments and responsibilities that limited the time she had available to enrol on courses and develop new skills.

Susan's role involves supporting pupils in class and with their coursework and in this context she realised that she would need to improve her IT skills in order to continue to support children effectively in their learning. Together with colleagues, Susan met with tutors from the Bridge Scheme and undertook an initial assessment which she found a pleasant surprise as it was more relaxed and informal than she had expected. She then agreed a learning plan with the tutors based around a series of appointments to review progress towards the NVQ Level 1 in IT which would be carried out during the working day to make it easier for all candidates to participate and progress.

### **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 main aim for Susan was to achieve the qualification and in the process increase her knowledge of and skills in the use of IT so as to improve the level of service and support she provides to pupils. Susan made steady and effective progress and completed the course in just over 7 months, achieving the qualification in May 2010.

Susan found her learning experience enjoyable and was especially pleased with the fact that she could contact her tutors at any time to discuss any aspect of the course. She also found it helpful when tutors gave practical demonstrations in aspects of IT that were new to her such as screenshots and keyboard short cuts. The flexible structure of the course built around the working day was also beneficial and also included some evening sessions where work and other commitments prevented participation during the day – Susan felt that some additional evening sessions would also have been welcome. One other area of improvement Susan suggested would be to simplify some of the learning materials to make it easier to identify and overcome gaps in knowledge.

Apart from the formal qualification, Susan felt that she had gained greater knowledge of and confidence in using IT which would be of value in her work. She also had a clearer understanding of how to access learning in the future in order to further enhance her skills to meet the requirements of her role.

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## **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, a quarterly Reach Out newsletter distributed across the region and national union networks and the Centre and Reach Out websites regularly updated with case studies and good news stories 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 31<sup>st</sup> 2010, 196 of whom are profiled to achieve NVQ1. To date 110 learners from 13 different employers in Greater Manchester have enrolled on the ITQ and completed an Individual Learning Plan detailing their learning aims and goals. 24 learners had achieved their NVQ1 as at the end of May 2010. The rate of retention of learners is approximately 80% due in

large 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. A number of candidates undertaking the NVQ 1 have already expressed their interest in registering for Level 2 which the Centre hopes to begin delivering in October 2010. 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 24 candidates have achieved their NVQ in IT while around 40 learners are expected to be assessed and achieve within the next two months. 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.

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## 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.  No
- 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

