

LSIS Supported Provider Collaborative Development projects

LSIS funded Getting People into Work project

Case study for Hopwood Hall College: “Get the Gist” – building confidence and self esteem of 16-24 JCP customers

Project background

LSIS supported a number of provider-led development projects, which were to run from November 2011 through to July 2012, with the aim of building the sector's capacity to design commission and deliver improvement and strategic change.

Our project, involved four providers; Knowsley Community College (KCC) as the lead provider, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Hopwood Hall College (HCC) and Training Tomorrow's Engineers (TTE). Each provider worked on initiatives within their own organisation and we came together to exchange good practice and resources.

This case study focuses specifically on HHC's initiative, which developed a new programme for young people, designed to improve their motivation to progress into work.

Introduction

Hopwood Hall College is a two sided campus based in Rochdale and Middleton. As part of its wider strategy, Hopwood Hall College continually introduces programmes to meet the changing job market. The College invested in shop premises adjacent to Rochdale job centre in 2009 and this shop is used for referrals from Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton Jobcentre Plus. The College also operates within Ground Work at Middleton, offering advice and guidance to Work Programme customers and delivers an advice and guidance service at Rochdale Probation.

The wider College offers a range of short and long courses in a range of subjects and sectors up to foundation degree. It has a Business Enterprise Academy, Marketing Academy, IT Networking Management Academy, IT Multimedia and Digital Applications Academy and Website Design and Management Academy. This year the College has introduced an Extended Life Sciences programme.

Training @ Hopwood is the College's employer engagement arm and links to all programmes for the unemployed, offering customers the opportunity to apply for Apprenticeship vacancies through them.

Project aims

The aims and intended outcomes of our project focused on the development of a new programme funded via the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Flexible Support Fund. Its purpose is to motivate young people to move into work and provide value up front support, which includes the following:

- building confidence and self esteem;
- breaking cycles of destruction;
- increasing levels of personal resilience;
- improving levels of self-awareness;
- improving communication skills;
- identifying realistic and achievable goals and suitable job choices; and
- starting to acquire skills to realise their job role potential via the Apprenticeship, full time education or work based learning routes.

Starting point

The College operates a range of successful programmes for people who are unemployed. We recognised a gap in provision that would allow us to focus on building self awareness, motivation and confidence of young people without driving them towards a skills-based qualification in the first instance.

Our starting point was based on a need to attract and retain more hard to reach young people than we believed was possible through our existing portfolio of provision.

Activity

To allow us to fund a potential pilot in this area we applied for funding through the DWP Flexible Support Fund. Once the funding was secured via the tendering process we were able to develop and create the, “Get the Gist” programme. We developed the programme in conjunction with a company called Clear Aims. Clear Aims has developed an innovative approach to supporting people into work and have a software solution called Self Smart, which helps to identify individual barriers to work. We marketed this programme to the Jobcentre Plus advisors as being appropriate for young customers who lacked the confidence, motivation to work or up skill, encouraging referrals for customers furthest away from the training and labour market.

We engaged with Edexcel very early on in the process to look at wrapping an appropriate qualification around the first week of our planned programme, as

there was nothing in the current suite of Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) units that would be suitable beyond the life of the pilot.

The programme itself was three weeks in duration, at fifteen hours per week.

Week 1

Intensive support programme provided by Clear Aims. All individuals received a one to one Self Smart assessment which identified their needs in relation to:

- building confidence and self esteem;
- breaking cycles of destruction;
- increasing levels of personal resilience;
- improving levels of self-awareness;
- improving communication skills;
- identifying realistic and achievable goals and suitable job choices with skills acquired; and
- identifying skills to be acquired to realise their job role potential.

Week 2

Learners progressed to the Edexcel Entry Level 3 BTEC Award and Certificate WorkSkills, Working in a Team. The tutor delivering this programme was introduced to the individuals during the intensive first week, which instilled confidence into the individuals and informed them of the seamless transition as a group to the WorkSkills Working in a Team, Entry Level 3 Award.

Week 3

All individuals received a one to one exit advice and guidance interview to progress to further provision available in various sectors to enhance their employability skills. The sales team from Hopwood Hall College attended to inform of current Apprenticeship vacancies and how to apply for these. They helped learners make contact with the correct personnel at Training @ Hopwood. The Work Experience Co-ordinator from Training @ Hopwood also attended to encourage and inform individuals to take up work experience to generate an up to date employer reference, and to enable the individual to gain valuable work experience in sectors they showed an interest in.

Impact

HHC and Clear Aims have delivered two programmes to date with 24 learners successfully progressing to, and achieving the Edexcel Entry Level 3 BTEC Award and Certificate WorkSkills, Working in a Team. Learner feedback has been extremely positive.

Cohort 1

- Thirteen JCP customers completed the one-week assessment with Clear Aims.
- Eight learners progressed and completed the two-week Edexcel Entry Level 3, BTEC Award and Certificate WorkSkills, Working in a Team. (QCF).
- The remaining five customers were contacted to encourage attendance at advice and guidance sessions to progress to other programmes for the unemployed.

Cohort 2

- Eleven JCP customers completed the one-week assessment with Clear Aims.
- Seven learners progressed and completed the Edexcel BTEC WorkSkills Entry level 3 Award: Working in a team (QCF).
- The remaining four customers were contacted to encourage attendance at advice and guidance sessions to progress to other programmes for the unemployed.

Learners who completed the Edexcel BTEC WorkSkills Entry Level 3 Award are continuing on various programmes on offer through Training @ Hopwood.

The development work with Edexcel and Clear Aims is well underway to look at fundable routes for the week one content and discuss higher level QCF qualifications. More information can be found on the Edexcel website.

We were delighted to be invited to Westminster to discuss the project with Simon Danzduk, Rochdale MP and will continue to keep him informed of our future activity, supporting young people within the Borough into training or work.

As a direct result of working with the other providers on this project, Knowsley College is piloting the use of the Clear Aims self-assessment tool with 2,000 learners from September 2012.

Top Tips

- Invest time in gathering information about all available funding streams for programmes for the unemployed that can complement your provision.

- Make contact with your local Jobcentre Plus Managers and make contact at a strategic level. This will enable your organisation to market your provision to the Jobcentre Plus advisors, generating referrals to your provision.
- Ensure a seamless process for Jobcentre Plus advisors to refer unemployed customers to your provision or service.
- Establish contacts within your local council skills teams, Work Programme providers and the National Careers Service advisors to help extend your partnerships and increase your referrals from other organisations within your local area.
- Ensure independent advice and guidance is offered up front to the unemployed customer to gauge skills acquired and skills required.
- Conduct exit interview advice and guidance sessions at the end of each 'short and fat' programme you deliver.
- Know exactly how to obtain your local labour market intelligence to enable you to plan provision that is fit for purpose.
- Embed Apprenticeship vacancies, work placement opportunities within your provision for the unemployed, and engage your teams who work closely with employers to provide advice to learners.
- Liaise and work with other internal teams within your own organisation for progression to your wider provision.

What next for us

HCC and Clear Aims will be looking for funding support to develop a training module for staff involved in employability provision to enhance their delivery skills at engaging with the NEET learner group.

We will continue to work in partnership with the LSIS provider group to develop our NEET provision, with arrangements already in place to meet early in the next term and further share resources and ideas.

“Through partnership working at its best, the results and impact are clearly identified throughout this case study. More importantly, the impact for the learners has been fantastic by introducing the valuable front-end provision provided by Clear Aims. I look forward to continuous partnership working with all organisations who were involved in this project.”

Karen Humphreys, Hopwood Hall College

Learner case studies

Amy completed the three-week programme and has continued with her education, obtaining the Edexcel BTEC Entry Level 3 Award: IT Users (ITQ) QCF. She completed this qualification as the programme delivery took place when her children were at school. Following the advice and guidance Amy received; she attended an interview at Hopwood Hall College and has been accepted on an Access programme. She will complete the qualifications to enable her to look at enhancing her career objectives, as she wishes to work with children with disabilities.

Amy said, "The content of week one gave me the confidence to bond with the group and to look at myself which enabled me to progress and achieve the team skills qualifications..."

Moheen completed the three week programme and has continued to progress to the Edexcel BTEC Health and Social Care Level one Award (QCF). Prior to attending the three-week programme, she was looking after her children full-time. She could not see a future for herself. She has now been accepted on the BTEC First Diploma Level 2 in Health and Social Care, and plans to have a career as a social care worker.

Moheen said, "This programme has changed my life and I am now looking forward to continuing and progressing to achieve my goals."

Contact details

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