



An Excellence Gateway case study

Published: 30th July 2012

Strode College

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Outline the aim

1. Improve the IAG to prospective employers of apprentices in order to support the employment of disadvantaged learners
2. Improve the IAG to prospective apprentices in order to support their disadvantage into employment
3. Develop a programme for embedding EDI into apprenticeship framework delivery in the workplace to enhance employer and employee understanding

The challenge

Providing opportunities for disadvantaged learners to gain access to apprenticeships

Partnership organisations

No other partners

The outputs

An employer event with 83 employers where a presentation was given regarding employing disadvantaged learners as apprentices

A series of apprenticeship road shows to 4 local schools to promote apprenticeships to Year 11 pupils. (approximately 500 pupils)

In-house assessor training session involving 9 assessors

Survey data providing information regarding apprentice views on EDI issues

Guide for employers booklet produced

The impacts and outcomes

Assessors including EDI analysis during interviews with all new apprentices and their employers.

Increased use of ASN funding to support apprentices (up from 2 to 5).

EDI analysis included in induction for all new assessors

Best practice models identified with some employers which will be promoted to others via regular updates/newsletters and website.

College considering sponsoring an EDI Business Award.

Increased applications for apprenticeships for 2012/13 (up from 15 to 33)

Expect significant increases in ASN funding for identified disadvantaged learners to be realised by September 2013.

Best practice case studies file to rise from 2 case studies to 10 by Jan 2013.

Increases in applications has already been realised.

5 learners are now receiving support for an additional need which would disadvantage them if support was not in place.

Unable to determine currently how many of the new applications have come from the designated equality groups until interviews and placements have been completed between now and August.

Working relationship with LSIS

Availability of funding for the project enabled resources to be available to complete this study and enable actions for improving access for future learners.

Good value for money

The project has provided opportunities to make the best use of apprenticeship funding to support disadvantaged learners and therefore meet government priorities.

This will have a positive economic impact on local communities in Somerset where new job opportunities will become available.

Senior managers involvement

Reports were provided to SMT meetings, Equality and Diversity Action Group and Adult Skills and Apprenticeships Meetings.

Raising awareness

As above, cross-college meetings and committees have been informed of the outcomes. In addition, a presentation will be made to the benchmarking colleges group. One of the project actions is also to roll the training and case studies out to the other college apprenticeships teams.

Continuity of project, after LSIS funding

The project will continue as the best practice case studies will be developed and shared with employers.

EDI analysis is now embedded into apprentice/employer sign ups.

Did you experience any difficulties in implementing the project and how did you overcome these?

There were no difficulties in implementing the project. However, in meeting with employers it is clear that there are still some barriers in understanding how to engage with disadvantaged learners and a low desire to make opportunities available.

It is intended that using best practice case studies and involving employers more in promoting their own diversity work, these barriers can be removed over time.

The lessons learned

Expect employers to be suspicious and wary of taking on an apprentice with EDI needs and be open and honest in your support.

Don't try to organise your own employer event, instead use existing organised events such as Chamber of Commerce meetings as 'buy-in' and attendance will be greater.

Sustainability – lasting legacy

We have ensured that new processes have been embedded into inductions and reviews.

Demonstrating impact – evidence of short and long term impact

Short-term impact – increased recruitment of apprentices and number of apprentices receiving ALS support; survey results – awareness raising – as reported at the E&D Action Group meeting Long term impact – improved communication channels with employers

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