

Flexible Delivery
Unit Delivery Trial
May - July 2011

Provider Case Studies



Introduction

The independent training providers featured in the case studies below took part in the Flexible Delivery – Unit Delivery Trial between May and July 2011. In the six case studies providers share their experiences of delivering single units to both learners co-funded by their employer and to those seeking employment. They highlight the opportunities, challenges and barriers of unit delivery for providers and the learners and employers they work with.

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JHP Group Limited

The JHP Group Ltd, comprising of JHP Training and JHP Employability, is one of the largest providers in the UK, working in a wide range of sectors offering Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and Employability programmes.

JHP saw the Unit Delivery Trial as an opportunity to test their approach to delivering training on a co-funded basis, within the Child Care sector, where they have a well established track record. They decided to offer employers the Level 2 Award in Paediatric First Aid, which is made up of two QCF units, Paediatric First Aid and Managing Paediatric Illness and Injury. The Award is part of the QCF Level 2 Children's and Young People's Workforce Certificate, which, in turn is part of an Apprenticeship framework.

They approached two employers who they have worked with and developed a good relationship with in the past, and they were both really keen to get involved, particularly as all child care practitioners are required to have an up to date first aid qualification. The employers participating in the trials were based in the East Midlands. JHP's Regional Manager negotiated the nature of the employer investment, both employers agreed to contribute £25 per learner.

In order to minimise the disruption to the employer, JHP agreed to work around established shift patterns, so the training was delivered on three consecutive Saturdays. The training took place at one of JHP's centres.

The 19 learners who were recruited on to the programme were split into two groups; one group attended the training in June and the second in July. The tutor who ran both courses had experience in delivering the Award and had already developed the training materials, so minimal preparation was required prior to delivering the course as part of the trials.

Learners

- The learners' high level of commitment to the programme was demonstrated by their willingness to attend outside of their normal hours of work and by the fact that all 19 learners achieved the full Award.
- When a few learners dropped out at the beginning of the programme the employers quickly found substitutes.
- The Feedback Records the learners were asked to complete at the end of the programme showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision. Although there wasn't any evidence available of the learners' understanding of the concept of credit accumulation and transfer.
- The learners (and their employers) valued the fact that the two units they completed made up a full qualification.

Provider

- For JHP the main benefits of being involved in the trials was the opportunity it gave them to broaden their offer to employers and by doing so strengthen the relationship with two key clients.

'All employers were happy to pay a contribution towards the training and found the fact that we did this on a weekend as an added bonus in terms of flexibility for staff rotas. We have had some really good employer

feedback', said Simon Ashworth, Performance and Project Manager, JHP Training.

- Apart from setting up new codes on the ILR, no changes had to be made to JHP's internal systems as they have previous experience of delivering single units.
- The single unit offer didn't present any issues in terms of JHP's relationship with their Awarding Organisation (AO). The AO they used was EDI who charged a single fee of £18 per learner, which covered both registration and certification for both units. As they have Direct Claim Status for the Award they were able to claim the certificates once the learners work had been assessed and gone through the internal quality assurance process. The Award is assessed through observation and a paper based test, which was drawn down from EDI's website and assessed internally.
- JHP staff did experience some difficulties when using the list of units that have been confirmed for funding within the trial. They felt that the list would have been more useful if it had given information about the qualifications that the units were part of and the AOs that offered them.
- Following their involvement in the trials JHP have begun to look at other units and Awards that can be offered to employers on a co-funded basis.
- They are also beginning to identify units that they will be able to offer to the unemployed through the Single Adult Budget and are starting to consider what will be viable in terms of group sizes, tutor to learner ratios and the length of courses leading to the achievement of single units.

Helpful Tip:

When providers first start to get involved in the delivery of single units they would be advised to select the units carefully, choosing units where they have a track record in delivering the qualifications of which the units are a constituent part and they have been approved by the AO to run. Ideally, try to select units from qualifications for which the centre has Direct Claim Status.

Real Time Training (RTT)

As a national provider with eight years experience of working with the long term unemployed, the team at RTT was keen to get involved with the strand for the unemployed within the Unit Delivery Trial. Initially they planned to deliver single IT units e.g. word processing, presentation and database software, but once they started to recruit learners on to the programme it quickly became apparent that employability skills would be more appropriate for some of the learners they had recruited. So, in addition to the IT units, they decided to offer units from Edexcel's Work Skills suite which includes job search activities, applying for jobs and interview skills.

RTT recruited 20 learners on to the programme (3 separate cohorts of 9, 5 and 6 learners). The training was delivered at RTT's centre in Leeds. All learners aimed to complete 2 units, in most cases over 5 days, (for learners who needed more time the programme was extended for up to two weeks).

17 learners achieved two units, one learner achieved 4 units, while the remaining two learners achieved a single unit. One of the learners had found employment by the end of the programme. RTT will track the remainder of the group to see if they are successful at securing jobs or progress on to an Apprenticeship or further learning.

Learners

- A range of strategies was needed to recruit learners on to the programme e.g. referrals from Job Centre Plus, recommendations from previous learners, tracking learners registered with RTT who were still unemployed.
- Evaluation forms indicated that learners were either satisfied or very satisfied with the provision.
- The cost of travel was an issue for some learners. RTT paid learners on the programme up to £20 a week for travel.
- A lot of the 'added value' activities (including a sandwich lunch) provided to learners on the pilot may well not be sustainable in the longer term depending on the level of funding for single units in the future.
- Missing part of the course to sign on was an issue for some learners. In some instances the delivery team at RTT contacted the local job centres to rearrange the times learners were required to sign on.
- The learners had very little awareness of the QCF nor any understanding of the concept of credit accumulation and transfer.

Provider

- Staff time was needed to adapt training materials to enable them to be delivered within short timescales and meet Awarding Organisation (AO) requirements.
- During the trial increased internal quality assurance was required. All materials went through the internal quality assurance processes prior to delivery and portfolio sampling was increased.

- Initial Assessment (IA) tools need to be reviewed. The tool currently being used with a range of abilities i.e. entry level to level 2 can be daunting for learners with complex needs. Costs of initial assessment tools need to be considered.
- RTT had talked to both Edexcel and BCS about their involvement in the trials and found the AOs “willing to listen and talk”. However the single unit route is significantly more expensive when compared to doing the units as part of a full qualification. In the case of the ITQ units with BCS, RTT reported that the Certificate, which is made up of 4 units, costs almost twice as much to do on a unit by unit basis rather than as a full qualification. If the qualification is done on a unit by unit basis it costs £60 in total compared with £35 if all the units are purchased together.
- Timing of the EV visit for the Work Skills programme with Edexcel didn't suit the short timescales of the single unit offer. RTT is working to achieve Direct Claim Status for the Work Skills qualifications which would enable them to claim the learners certificate on achievement of the unit.
- The on-demand, on-screen assessment used for the IT units (which are part of the ITQ) are ideal for single unit delivery. Some of the certificates for units achieved by the first cohort were available to present to the learner before the end of the course.
- RTT staff didn't find the list of fundable units provided by the Agency very easy to use. They felt it would be more useful if it stated which AO the units were offered by and the qualifications they were part of. Checking this information on the Register of Regulated Qualifications was very time consuming.

Helpful Tip:

Spend time developing a relationship with local Job Centre Plus staff. They are an invaluable source of referrals and are more likely to work round your programme when arranging signing on times with the learners if you have a good relationship with them.

Care Training East Midlands

Care Training East Midlands (CTEM), have an established programme working with employers and matching their vacancies to unemployed learners referred from the job centre.

Before being referred to an employer learners attend one of CTEM's centres in either Nottingham or Derby, two and a half days a week for three weeks, during which time they are given an introduction to working in the care sector and can access support with applying for jobs and interview techniques. Historically none of this training was accredited, so the Unit Delivery Trials offered an ideal opportunity to develop the programme so that it gave the learners the opportunity to achieve single QCF units.

CTEM selected two units that they had Direct Claim Status for: Dementia Awareness (which is one of four units that make up the level 2 award in Dementia Awareness) and Causes and Spread of Infection (which is part of the QCF level 2 Health and Social Care qualifications).

15 learners were recruited on to the pilot programme.

All the learners achieved both units. They also all attended an interview with one of the employers involved in the programme. Feedback from employers following the interviews indicates that 2 or 3 of the learners will be recruited as Project Workers and a further 6 will be offered an Apprenticeship. Where learners progress on to a full qualification or an Apprenticeship, once they have secured a job, the employer is asked to make a cash contribution to any future training.

Learners

- Completed Evaluation Forms show high levels of learner satisfaction. All the learners rated the programme as either good or excellent.
- The concept of credit accumulation and transfer was explained to learners during the induction. CTEM staff felt that learners had some understanding of the benefits of QCF and valued the opportunity to achieve single units that could contribute to full qualifications.

Provider

- Staff spent time developing new resources that covered the assessment criteria of both units.
- CTEM staff have been frustrated by the lack of guidance from Awarding Organisations on the delivery and assessment of single units. In some instances the requirements, in terms of qualifications for staff assessing knowledge based QCF units, were not clear. CTEM is considering using one unit from the new suite of units and qualifications for Assessors to up skill tutors and equip them for the assessment of knowledge based units.
- Single unit delivery has resulted in an increase in Internal Quality Assurance activity, but because CTEM has Direct Claim Status (DCS) for the units used on the trials, there haven't been any issues with External Quality Assurance (EQA). However, staff expressed concern that the timing of EQA visits could be an issue in the future when they begin to deliver single units that they haven't got DCS for.

- CTEM staff are beginning to look at other units that they will be able to deliver to the unemployed through the Single Adult Budget, interrogating the Register of Approved Qualifications, checking the list of units that are confirmed for funding and liaising with Awarding Organisations.
- Job Centre Plus are keen for CTEM to begin to offer employability units e.g. Edexcel's Work Skills Programme which can be combined with sector focused units.

Helpful Tip:

It is worth spending time familiarising yourself with the rules of combination for both the qualifications you already deliver and new qualifications, by doing so you will begin to spot opportunities for moving into new areas and engaging with different clients.

HIT Training

HIT Training, a large national provider specialising in training and assessment within the hospitality sector, decided to pilot the co-funded strand of the trials working with the Vine Yard Group. HIT have a very good relationship with the HR Director at Vine Yard built up over the last 2 years. This enabled them to work with the HR Director on developing a meaningful programme utilising two QCF units (Motivating the Team to Perform and Induction and Coaching in the Workplace) which are part of the QCF level 2 Award in Team Leading. The Vine Yard were keen to use the programme to reward existing talent across their business, developing and consolidating existing skills whilst offering an opportunity to staff who want to progress within the business.

Ten employees, from three of the group's hotels, attended the course which was run over 2 days at the company's hotel near Newbury. The delegates were all first line managers/supervisors in a range of settings e.g. event management, spa and leisure facilities, food and beverage. Seven members of the group had English as a second language.

It was agreed that the employer's contribution would be 'in kind'. The Vine Yard Group provided the training facilities, which included overnight accommodation for the learners and the trainer plus all the refreshments.

Learners

- The learners had no knowledge of QCF prior to attending the programme. The concept of credit accumulation and transfer was discussed at the learners' second review and they were given information on possible progression routes.
- Learners recognised the benefit of accredited training and felt the course would be helpful both to their current roles and future progression.
- All the learners seemed to be enthusiastic and well motivated, they were very complimentary about the trainer and about the content of the course.
- There appeared to have been very limited discussion between the delegates and their line managers about the course prior to attending.

Provider

- Workbooks had been developed specifically for the course, adapting existing training materials. Delivering 2 units over 2 days meant that the training had to be very focused so existing materials needed to be condensed.
- HIT staff found the list of units confirmed for funding within the Unit Delivery Trial difficult to use, it doesn't make it clear which units are knowledge based and which are competence units, neither does it give information about the Awarding Organisations (AOs) that offer the units. Cross referencing against the Register of Regulated Qualifications is time consuming.

- HIT's Development Director felt that in some instances the credit value given to units was illogical, which can lead to confusion amongst staff, learners and employers.
- The main consideration when selecting the AO was the assessment method they offered. ILM were chosen because they offered preset assignments (with mark schemes) for both units, whereas other AOs used an on screen test to assess one of the units, which would have required access to PCs (not easy to organise when delivering off site). HIT also have Direct Claim Status for the Team Leading qualifications with ILM and were able to negotiate a good price for the units.
- HIT are confident that the single unit offer would prove to be a good 'hook' into Apprenticeships. Once they have successfully delivered either a single unit or cluster of units they feel that employers will be far more receptive to allowing their employees to progress on to an Adult Apprenticeship.

Helpful Tip:

Involve the Awarding Organisations you work with in your planning for the delivery of single QCF units and don't be afraid to negotiate on price!

In Touch Care

In Touch Care, who are based in Sheffield, work predominantly in the health and social care sector (including child care and dental nursing), but are also major providers of teacher training and assessment/quality assurance qualifications.

Keen to explore the opportunities single unit delivery offered to both employers and individuals seeking work, the team at In Touch Care decided to work on both strands of the trials i.e. with unemployed learners and the co-funded provision.

Initially they planned to offer the following health and social care units to the unemployed.

- Induction to duty of care in health, social care or children and young people's setting.
- Paediatric Emergency First Aid.

However early on in the programme they replaced the first aid unit with a unit called Causes and Spread of Infection which was thought to be more relevant to a wider range of health care settings. They planned to offer both units to 20 learners on a roll on roll off programme with each unit delivered in 4 days over a 2 week period.

Ten unemployed learners were recruited, each to undertake two units. One of the unemployed learners has progressed on to a level 3 Apprenticeship.

Within the co-funded strand thirteen learners were recruited on to a one day Dementia Awareness course from four different employers (charities, voluntary organisations and private care providers). The course covers the Dementia Awareness unit (one of the four units that make up the level 2 Award in Dementia Awareness). It is anticipated that all the learners will achieve the unit and progress on to the full Award.

In Touch Care also delivered the level 4 unit, Understanding the Principles and Practices of Internally Assuring the Quality of Assessment, to 7 learners from another group of employers, as a three day course. All the learners completed the course and have progressed on to the full qualification.

Learners

- Recruiting unemployed learners proved more challenging than anticipated. A range of recruitment strategies was used including direct advertising, referrals from local job centres, referrals from intermediaries e.g. Sector Brokers working for BEST who are partners in the Opportunities Sheffield programme.
- In Touch Care received a number of enquiries from unemployed people who were seeking work in the health and social care sector, but were not on active benefits, so were not eligible for the programme (they were entitled to claim benefits but chose not to).
- Absenteeism due to sickness, caring responsibilities and the cost of travel was an issue with unemployed learners. In future, In Touch Care is planning to deliver some of the training at a city centre venue, to cut down the cost of travel and thereby improve retention.

- Some unemployed learners also missed training days due to clashes with their 'signing on day' at the job centre. In some instances In Touch Care wrote to the job centre explaining the situation and requesting some flexibility in the arrangements for signing on.
- The evaluation forms learners were asked to complete at the end of their course showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision.
- In Touch Care staff reported that learners' understanding of the QCF and the concept of credit accumulation and transfer was variable. Although the portability of units was explained to both groups of learners during the induction process it was felt that more time would be needed before the unemployed learners really understood the benefits of the QCF.

Provider

- Although the roll on roll of delivery model offers real flexibility for the learner, it has meant that some of the groups have been very small, which is unlikely to be viable in the longer term.
- Local advertising has not been very cost effective. Referrals from Job Centre Plus and other organisations proved to be the most effective way of recruiting unemployed learners.
- E learning, which In Touch Care has used very successfully on a range of programmes in the past, was not found to be as appropriate when working with the unemployed.
- The units selected for the trials are all part of qualifications that In Touch Care is approved to run and has Direct Claim Status for, but they are in the process of seeking approval to run new units and qualifications as part of the Single Adult Budget and have found the Awarding Organisation's (AO) approval process onerous.
- Registering learners for single units and claiming certificates has been straight forward, although In Touch Care are concerned about the cost of doing a qualification unit by unit when compared with purchasing a full qualification.
- The Data Service was very helpful and supportive in sorting out initial problems claiming funding using the Training Provider Statement (TPS). The TPS is only used to claim funding for units delivered as part of the trials.
- Feedback from employers has been positive. Employers who have sent their staff on the Dementia Awareness course are confident that the training will help improve the quality of care provided to the people they look after.

Helpful Tip:

When planning training programmes for the unemployed, careful consideration needs to be given to the viability of group sizes and tutor/learner ratios.

Skills Training UK

Skills Training UK is a specialist employability and skills training provider who provide a diverse range of employment solutions and back-to-work services, such as Flexible New Deal, New Deal, Skills for Life and Train to Gain. They work with some of the most disadvantaged groups in society. Skills Training also offer Apprenticeships in Customer Service, Team Leading, Retail, Business Administration and Management. The company operates from 12 centres based throughout the South of England.

The team at Skills Training saw the Unit Delivery Trial as an opportunity to begin to deliver single QCF units to the unemployed in advance of the introduction of the Single Adult Skills Budget. It was a chance to build on relationships with Job Centre Plus (JCP) staff and test approaches to both recruitment and delivery.

Initially 22 learners, between the ages of 19 and 24, were recruited from local Job Centres, five learners dropped out prior to actually starting the programme, so the course started with 17 learners (the majority of whom were male). The team selected two employability units from the list of units confirmed for funding within the trials, Effective Skills, Qualities and Attitudes for Learning at Work and Planning for Progression. Both units were Entry Level 3 and had a credit value of 3. The course tutor developed a comprehensive support pack containing a range of resources and exercises designed to ensure that the learners were able to achieve the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the units. All the learners were targeted to achieve both units. It is anticipated that 11 will meet their target, while 3 learners will achieve one unit. Four learners didn't complete the programme due to childcare issues or other family problems, however, they have all expressed the willingness to complete the remaining parts, as they have enjoyed the training and found it very beneficial, seeing it as important to their future.

The programme was delivered at Skills Training's centre in Hounslow over a two week period, the learners attended the centre from 09.00 to 16.00, 5 days each week. The group were allocated one tutor but were also supported by a Customer Support Manager and Customer Advisor who worked with the learners on job search activities throughout the programme. This support continued until a successful job outcome was achieved.

A total of 11 interviews were arranged for the learners during the programme, which resulted in 4 job offers, in the following sectors, Retail, Warehousing, Construction and Driving.

Learners

- Learners engaged in the sessions, the majority actively contributing to the discussion.
- Training Feedback Reports completed by learners at the end of the first week of the programme showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision, all the reports reviewed (11) showed that the learners rated the course as good or outstanding.

- All learners went through a robust initial assessment and action planning process at the beginning of the programme during which job goals and barriers to employment were discussed.
- All the learners were given information and an overview of the QCF at induction, this was supported by question and answer sessions in which further understanding and information was given.
- Skills Training paid the learners' travel costs and provided them with lunch and snacks.
- Learners were given intensive support in interview preparation, including pre interview assessments and role plays.

Provider

- Skills Training produced a flyer promoting the course which the tutor delivered to local Job Centres. Meeting JCP staff face to face helped to forge strong relationships.
- JCP staff were provided with feedback on the learners progress and job search activities.
- Skills Training's Account Managers maintained a large database containing a wide range of vacancies and developed good relationships with local employers.
- C&G were used as the AO, they charged £10 per unit. The process of registering the learners was very straightforward. Skills Training had Direct Claim Status for the units they were delivering so were able to apply for certificates on an as needs basis.
- Skills Training feel that it is very important to celebrate the learners' achievements and were planning an award ceremony at the end of the programme.
- The team were confident that the programme would enable learners to progress on to Apprenticeships.
- The learners who secured jobs are currently settling into their new roles. The Apprenticeship team at Skills Training will contact their employers, to offer them the opportunity to start their new employee on an Apprenticeship. They will also discuss the skill needs of their existing workforce.

Helpful Tip:

To be successful at securing job outcomes for unemployed learners, time needs to be spent developing relationships with local employers and really understanding the demographics and cultural influences on employment with the local community the provider serves.



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