



Foundation Learning Support

Provider case study

Havering College of Further and Higher Education A whole organisation approach to Foundation Learning

Introduction

Havering College of Further and Higher Education is a large, general further education (FE) college located to the east of London. Although the College was not part of the Foundation Learning pilot, it is committed to delivering all of its Entry level and Level 1 programmes within the Foundation Learning framework from September 2010.

Aims

The College's aims were to:

- implement Foundation Learning by adapting a whole organisation approach by September 2010;
- provide a more inclusive and flexible offer to all Entry level and Level 1 learners;
- improve collaboration between key departments.

Approach

The key issue for the College at the beginning of this project was raising awareness of Foundation Learning among all staff.

To manage this process, the College adopted a whole organisation approach. They identified a Foundation Learning lead, and nominated the lead to join the LSIS Foundation Learning champions' training programme. An implementation group was set up, which included the deputy directors of all subject areas, along with representatives from management information systems (MIS), information, advice and guidance (IAG), staff development, the school liaison manager, teaching and learning and the Skills for Life lead.

The implementation group developed their understanding of Foundation Learning by attending training events and holding fortnightly meetings, leading to the development of an implementation action plan for the whole organisation.

The Foundation Learning champion delivered professional development for practitioners with pre-training and post-training activities. The post-training activities were instrumental in replacing the current provision with new Foundation Learning provision by setting tasks, with clear deadlines, for all relevant practitioners across the organisation.

Subject deputy directors audited their Entry and Level 1 provision against qualifications included in the Foundation Learning qualifications catalogue and also contacted awarding organisations to identify appropriate Foundation Learning qualifications.

Responsibility for all three components of Foundation Learning has been allocated and there are central quality monitoring systems for functional skills and the personal and social development (PSD) components to ensure consistency in practice across the organisation.

The College lead for Foundation Learning is also the deputy director for business, care and service sectors and knows from her experience of working with learners that their confidence and readiness to learn can be enhanced by small chunks of learning separately recognised. Foundation Learning provides a comprehensive set of bite-sized qualifications that can be tailored to the needs and aspirations of learners. The College lead particularly valued the way that it allows learners to ‘mix and match’ qualifications at different levels (Entry 1–3 and Level 1) and of different sizes (Award, Certificate and Diploma), giving tutors a better chance to personalise the Foundation Learning programmes within a relatively fixed timeframe.

Impact

The introduction of Foundation Learning provision has opened up doors for flexible and accessible provision for the learners, in line with their needs.

Staff awareness of the Foundation Learning offer has improved and the College now feels ready to respond to curriculum changes as well as meet learners’ needs.

The College is keen that no learning should be lost and this is something they have emphasised in the development of the learning programmes. All the programmes have clear identified progression routes through to the next level or across levels, where appropriate.

The Foundation Learning support provided by LSIS has been instrumental in the success of this project, and has contributed to emerging good practice around:

- a whole organisation approach;
- a common implementation action plan;
- senior management support;
- managing change by focusing on what is working rather than what is not.

Lessons learned

- Professional development for practitioners helped to raise their awareness of the Foundation Learning offer and their commitment to implementation.
- It is best to focus on what is working rather than what is not.
- Discuss funding implications with the local Learning and Skills Council.
- Senior management support is crucial for successful implementation.

Next steps

The College will continue to:

- monitor the Foundation Learning implementation action plan through the Foundation Learning Implementation Group;
 - provide clear and precise course information for prospective Foundation Learning learners;
 - review and revise Foundation Learning curriculum models.
- They will also explore:
- introducing an accredited induction plan for Foundation Learning learners, so that no learning is lost;
 - opportunities for accrediting all learning throughout the learner journey.

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