

Brighton and Hove City Council

Delivering personal and social development (PSD) and functional skills to vulnerable learners and learners with challenging behaviours

Introduction

Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) is a unitary authority in south east England. The 14-19 Engagement Team, which sits within the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT), leads on the development and implementation of several programmes. These include the local key stage 4 engagement programme, a key stage 4 pre-engagement programme (funded by the European Social Fund (ESF)) for vulnerable young people aged 14-16 and one of the four national Entry to Learning (E2L) pilots targeting vulnerable 16-17 year olds who are not in education employment or training (NEET).

The team is directly involved in the development and implementation of Foundation Learning in the city and has worked closely with delivery providers to ensure that the programmes

it offers fit within the Foundation Learning framework from September 2010.

City College Brighton and Hove (CCBH) is the largest post-16 provider in Brighton and Hove and currently provides education and training to more than 10,000 full- and part-time students on courses ranging from Entry level to foundation degree level.

In recent years a significant investment has been made in a specialist inclusion unit, which enables the college to deliver programmes to 14-16 year olds (currently 550 learners) including those from the key stage 4 engagement and pre-engagement programmes. For post-16 provision, the college has a well-established Entry to Employment (E2E) programme to which value is added through 'Opt in' - an ESF-funded employability programme.

The college has also delivered bridging programmes for the E2L pilot. CCBH has developed a collaborative Foundation Learning offer for September 2010, which will enable learners to engage in a personalised programme of learning where successful progression is the key priority.

This development project took place between January-June 2010.

Aims

The project was designed to:

- raise awareness of Foundation Learning among professionals in the city who work with vulnerable learners and learners with challenging behaviours
- develop a delivery and resource pack containing guidance and shared visions and supported by sample session plans and teacher notes

- investigate a city-wide approach to the development of PSD and functional skills provision within Foundation Learning that takes into consideration the learning and pastoral needs of the young people
- develop joint CPD and in-service training (INSET) sessions including session planning meetings for staff in partner organisations in the city
- develop a 'Professional Friend' scheme which links skilled and experienced workers (mentors) with less experienced practitioners (mentees) in order to support and encourage their work in the delivery of Foundation Learning to vulnerable learners and learners with challenging behaviours.

Approach

As a first step, the 14-19 engagement team manager brought together expert practitioners from schools, colleges, third sector training providers, the Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Service (YOS) and various Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) teams from across the city, all of whom were working with vulnerable learners or learners with challenging behaviours on a daily basis. Twenty practitioners attended this meeting to:

- explore the issues around working with young people who are either vulnerable or at risk of disengagement
- identify what makes a successful programme
- discuss the impact of different Foundation Learning delivery models on young people
- consider what would make a good session plan for the PSD and functional skills elements of Foundation Learning.

From this initial meeting a taskforce of experts was formed to meet the aims and intended outcomes.

Developing the delivery and resource pack

One of the taskforce's first steps was to develop a delivery and resource pack. This pack was intended for practitioners who currently work with, or may in the future work with, the city's most vulnerable learners and those with challenging behaviours within the Foundation Learning framework. This may include teachers, tutors, support tutors, teaching assistants, learning mentors, behaviour development workers, inclusion workers, curriculum planners and managers.

Although a small part of the pack is specific to Brighton

and Hove, the pack could be used in other settings to:

- find out more about Foundation Learning and where to access further information
- learn more about and/or reinforce knowledge of the most common barriers to learning faced by young people and strategies to address them using Foundation Learning
- identify what makes learning successful
- learn about the benefits and disadvantages of the most common delivery models
- access a Foundation Learning checklist for implementation which should be used when developing the PSD and functional skills elements of the curriculum designed for vulnerable and challenging learners
- gain helpful tips on marketing PSD and functional skills to learners.

The pack contains examples of PSD and functional skills session plans for 'Construct a Hut', a construction course run by City College. Whilst these examples are specific to this course, it is possible to relate this learning to other vocational courses.

Establishing a mentoring scheme for staff

One of the original project aims was to develop a buddying scheme to ensure that new and existing teaching staff and tutors involved with Foundation Learning delivery across the city are fully supported to reflect on their practice and improve the pastoral care that young people experience in and out of school settings. This has been further developed as a more formal Professional Friend mentoring scheme, which sits with the 14-19 engagement team within the local authority.

Mentors for this scheme are expected to volunteer their time; the only funding allocated to this scheme was to pay a voluntary sector organisation to deliver mentoring training. The benefits of involvement, both as a mentor or mentee, are described in the professional Friend pack (see Resource 3). This pack could be adapted by any organisation or local authority to set up and run a mentoring scheme.

Providing CPD through INSET sessions

The project introduced the delivery and resource pack, and launched the Professional Friend scheme

at its first INSET session (Resource 2 – INSET Session plan). The task force created a web page detailing the project outline with links to all of the resources developed during the project to disseminate the information shared at this session.

The next session, 'Thinking outside the classroom', will use as its focus the 'Working as a Team' unit from the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) Level 1 Award in Personal Effectiveness from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/unit/F5023586.seo.aspx?OwnerRef>. The INSET session plan and resources will be uploaded to the webpage in due course. The local authority will be offering funding to schools to release relevant staff for this session.

Successes

The task force identified the following key successes of the project:

- a high level of co-operation between delivery providers and agencies in the city and strengthened relationships between partners
- raised city-wide awareness of the needs and barriers to learning of vulnerable young people and those with challenging behaviours

- a commitment by all partners to design an appropriate Foundation Learning curriculum for those young people who will not necessarily follow a linear path through academic learning
- an increased city-wide knowledge of local providers and organisations that support vulnerable learners
- initiation of a mapping process to catalogue city-wide provision and give students clarity in their progression pathways
- the commitment by taskforce members to share their skills, knowledge, experience and passion through delivery of INSET sessions
- recognition of the ability to accredit the essential pastoral elements of working with vulnerable learners through the PSD element of Foundation Learning.

Challenges and lessons learned

Key challenges emerging during the project included:

- the time commitment, above and beyond the day job, required of task force members
- bringing together a diverse range of people with different job roles, from different organisations

- co-ordinating meetings and the sharing of tasks, which was at times challenging requiring strong leadership and high levels of commitment and professionalism to ensure that deadlines were met with good quality work produced
- keeping the project manageable, on track and within the agreed remit. It was important to ensure that any additional recommendations or tasks were passed to the more strategic Foundation Learning Implementation Group (FLIG) for action.

Impact and outcomes

The project is expected to have significant impact on Foundation Learning provision in the Brighton and Hove area.

- A greater awareness and understanding of what is required in order to develop and implement Foundation Learning will lead to an appropriate and comprehensive Foundation Learning offer for the young people in the city.
- Attendance at the city-wide INSET sessions will lead to increased levels of knowledge and motivation amongst the workforce. This in turn will help to improve practice and facilitate the development of a community of Foundation Learning practitioners.

- The project has established identified channels of support for organisations and their workforces. These include the taskforce, Foundation Learning Implementation Group, Professional Friend scheme, Foundation Learning Champions and the local authority 14-19 team.
- A raised awareness of Foundation Learning amongst specialist agencies working with vulnerable young people will enable staff to refer the young people onto appropriate provision and to offer guidance to providers about the learning needs of their client group.
- The development of shared resources, and the commitment to develop a city-wide resource pack for the delivery of PSD, will lead to a more inclusive, coherent and holistic approach to Foundation Learning provision.
- More appropriate pastoral support has been established through ongoing city-wide INSET sessions delivered by the taskforce and by revision of the city-wide off-site delivery protocols and application processes.

Conclusion and next steps

The project has opened minds to the opportunity of

developing genuinely innovative work with disadvantaged and challenging young people. It has raised the profile of Foundation Learning in the city and therefore raised the profile of the learners it is designed to serve.

The taskforce intends to continue to meet for the foreseeable future and to promote the needs and requirements of the city's most vulnerable learners. It will report to the Foundation Learning Implementation Group (FLIG) and provide regular updates on its progress. Its next steps are to:

- present the findings and recommendations of the project to date to the FLIG
- agree the future remit of the taskforce with the FLIG
- deliver the next INSET session in July 2010 and to plan a series of further INSET sessions and twilight planning workshops
- offer the Professional Friend scheme city-wide
- trial and evaluate the session resources with young people across the city
- update the Brighton and Hove Learning Partnership's Foundation Learning Development Project web page on a regular basis.

Further information

Resources

Resource 1: Delivery and resource pack for delivering the PSD and functional skills elements of Foundation Learning to vulnerable learners and learners with challenging behaviours

Resource 2: INSET session (1) plan and teacher notes

Resource 3: Professional Friend scheme – guidance and application pack comprising:

- 3a An introduction
- 3b The process
- 3c Application
- 3d Agreement
- 3e Mentee application form

The partnership also utilised the LA Lead Toolkit presentation which was developed by LSIS

Further resources from this development project are available on the partnership's web page: www.bhlp.org.uk/1419-learning/foundation-learning-tier

Contact

Kirsten Trussell, 14-19
Engagement Team Manager
Brighton & Hove City
Council

King's House
Grand Avenue
Hove BN3 2LS
Kirsten.Trussell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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