

Quality in Partnership (Quip)

Humber Learning Consortium



Project Synopsis

Quip (Quality in Partnership) was a collaborative project between 2 voluntary sector learning consortia, which aimed to build capacity and strengthen all areas of quality in a defined target group of 30 voluntary and community sector delivery partners across the Humber and North Yorkshire.

The key findings of the project were that partners now have a much better understanding of what is expected from the Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted and this has resulted in improvements to quality processes.

Project Aims

The overall aim of *Quip* was to strengthen 30 voluntary sector organisations (VSOs) as high quality providers of learning and skills opportunities.

Quip was based on the longitudinal research of Osborne, which holds that networked voluntary organisations are inherently more innovative in terms of service delivery than voluntary organisations, which typically develop more slowly and incrementally as a result of working alone.

Quip networked voluntary organisations on two different levels. At a meta-level it brought together Humber Learning Consortium (HLC) and North Yorkshire Learning Consortium (NYLC), in order that they could network regularly, share learning, and develop joint infrastructure support services for their respective delivery partners / members. At the secondary level (where the majority of *Quip* activities occurred), 30 delivery partners were networked by HLC and NYLC jointly delivering a programme of group and one-to-one performance & quality enhancement activities supported by a virtual learning environment (VLE). The programme was geared to the Common Inspection Framework and specifically reflected the needs and operational context of the learning consortia VCS delivery partners. This approach encouraged knowledge transfer, where VCS delivery partners (including the learning consortia) shared good practice to drive quality improvement.

Project Delivery

Central to *Quip* was a dedicated microsite, which enabled 30 geographically dispersed delivery partners to access quality and organisational development information, peer support and learning materials at any time. Screen shots of the *Quip* website (see appendix figs i – iv) illustrate the type of materials available through the *Quip* site including; network meeting presentations; Equality and Diversity resources and toolkit; HLC self assessment report; training materials (e.g., RARPA and ILP SMART targets); Smart-board activities; plus useful links to other resources e.g. LSIS.

In a recent Partner Survey (November 2011) involving the *Quip* delivery partners, 100% of delivery partners rated HLC as a partner as being good or outstanding, an improvement on 79% recorded in 2009/10. 100% of delivery partners also rated their relationship with HLC as being good or outstanding.

HLC and NYLC obtained feedback from delivery partners in relation to the *Quip* support provided to delivery partners. A sample of replies is given below, confirming that the *Quip* support to delivery partners has been beneficial:

- “Help in preparing for the writing of the SAR and Quality Improvement Plan is useful, in particular, use of data and changes to the requirements of Ofsted”.
- “Staff members have been delighted at training given in E&D and Safeguarding”.
- “The more I attend the meetings, my knowledge of filling in paperwork to a higher quality will increase”.
- “HLC provide excellent guidance with any questions on projects, both written and verbal. There are good ‘good practice’ meetings to allow other providers to talk and share issues and success”.
- “Good training given with equipment such as Smartboard”.
- “Good one-to-one support and advice given by HLC on quality related issues. It is easy to ask for help”.
- “Attending the QINs is really beneficial”.
- “Training events and meeting other people who deliver HLC contracts is useful”.
- “I like to attend the QIN sessions whenever I can and like the openness of the staff when it comes to dealing with any issues”.

A tutor network survey was also carried out with the delivery partners. The aim of the survey was to look at continuing professional development (CPD); to benchmark CPD activities and to provide information with a view to developing better support services for our Quality Improvement Network members. The survey identified that the main priorities for CPD amongst the tutors were preparing for OFSTED; understanding and using RARPA; Equality & diversity; using ICT; safeguarding; differentiation; lesson planning and initial assessment. The survey highlighted the need to expand the Quality Improvement Network to include the training needs requested; increase emphasis on the *Quip* for tutors as well as managers and to use the *Quip* as a repository to ensure that all tutors are kept informed of new procedures and updates even if they are unable to attend a Quality Improvement Network session.

In the original plan, we had envisaged recording video footage of each Quality Improvement Network to produce video summaries of the training events. The practicality of shooting and editing these videos was difficult. We produced one video of a Quality Improvement Network and one of an E&D training session. Whilst we will continue to use the *Quip* website as a virtual learning environment for our delivery partners, any future video footage is likely to be licensed from appropriate suppliers, or secured from open sources.

Project Outcomes

Results of the project:

- 2 learning consortia have increased the level of their collaborative delivery of quality support services to VCS delivery partners
- 30 VCS delivery partners have an improved understanding and expertise in relation to quality improvement issues /requirements
- 30 VCS delivery partners have improved their access to quality improvement support and peer networks

The *Quip* project has enabled 30 geographically dispersed VCS delivery partners across North Yorkshire and Humber to develop and implement systems and processes in order to effectively manage quality and performance.

Outcomes have included:

- 1) understanding the demands and grading structure of the new common inspection framework
- 2) developing a rigorous self assessment process resulting in an accurate and evaluative self assessment report
- 3) evidencing capacity to improve by the use of a robust quality improvement plan
- 4) gaining confidence in collecting, collating, analysing and interpreting performance data
- 5) making effective use of data to support decision making to improve the learner's experience
- 6) delivering success rates in line with national averages
- 7) developing internal systems and processes to address ongoing quality and performance issues

All HLC delivery partners involved in the *Quip* project submitted a SAR. Each SAR was validated with the majority of grades and judgments being found to be accurate.

The project successfully achieved its original aims in terms of identifying delivery partners who could benefit from individual as well as group support. Group support was provided effectively through the regular Quality Improvement Network sessions, at least 2 of which were available jointly across the 2 consortia. The *Quip* microsite was made readily available to all delivery partners offering a range of materials, discussion groups, blogs and shared resources.

Each delivery partner undertook an organisational development needs analysis to establish their support needs in relation to quality and performance management. An individual development plan was completed for each delivery partner, with agreed outcomes. A series of group training and support events were effectively delivered focusing on quality and performance themes, mainly in relation to the annual quality cycle; common inspection framework and production of a Self-Assessment Report / Quality Improvement Plan. The project has been a very effective tool highlighting the strengths of the partners as well as areas for improvement. The programme demonstrated a good exchange and sharing of best practice and has resulted in a more robust partnership.

Timely individual support was provided through visits to each delivery partner (up to a maximum of 3 visits) during which mentoring and coaching on identified issues was provided. Key themes evolved and were acknowledged throughout the process, including training needs in relation to Smart-board technology and Equality & Diversity, in addition to the generic quality issues. Where a common theme was identified across the majority of delivery partners, e.g., Equality and Diversity, a specialist trainer was commissioned to deliver training to the group and further resources were made available.

The project will be sustained through ongoing support to delivery partners through the Quality Improvement Network and maintenance of *Quip* microsite by MIS officer at HLC. A successful bid through LSIS has been secured to further develop E&D processes and procedures with the identified delivery partners.

In 2012-13, we will continue to build on the benefits of *Quip* by including further resources. We will also be widening access to the *Quip* website to include emergent delivery partners and smaller community groups across Yorkshire & the Humber that are successful in securing an ESF Community Grant.

Sharing of Project Findings

The *Quip* project findings will be shared in the following ways:

- Quip findings highlighted at Quality Improvement Network (QIN) sessions – planned throughout 2012 (6 sessions – Feb, Apr, July, Sept, Oct, Dec).
- The findings highlighted on the Quip website for all partners to read
- Materials placed on the LSIS Excellence Gateway
- Final Quip report on HLC and NYLC websites

Appendix
Figure i



Figure ii

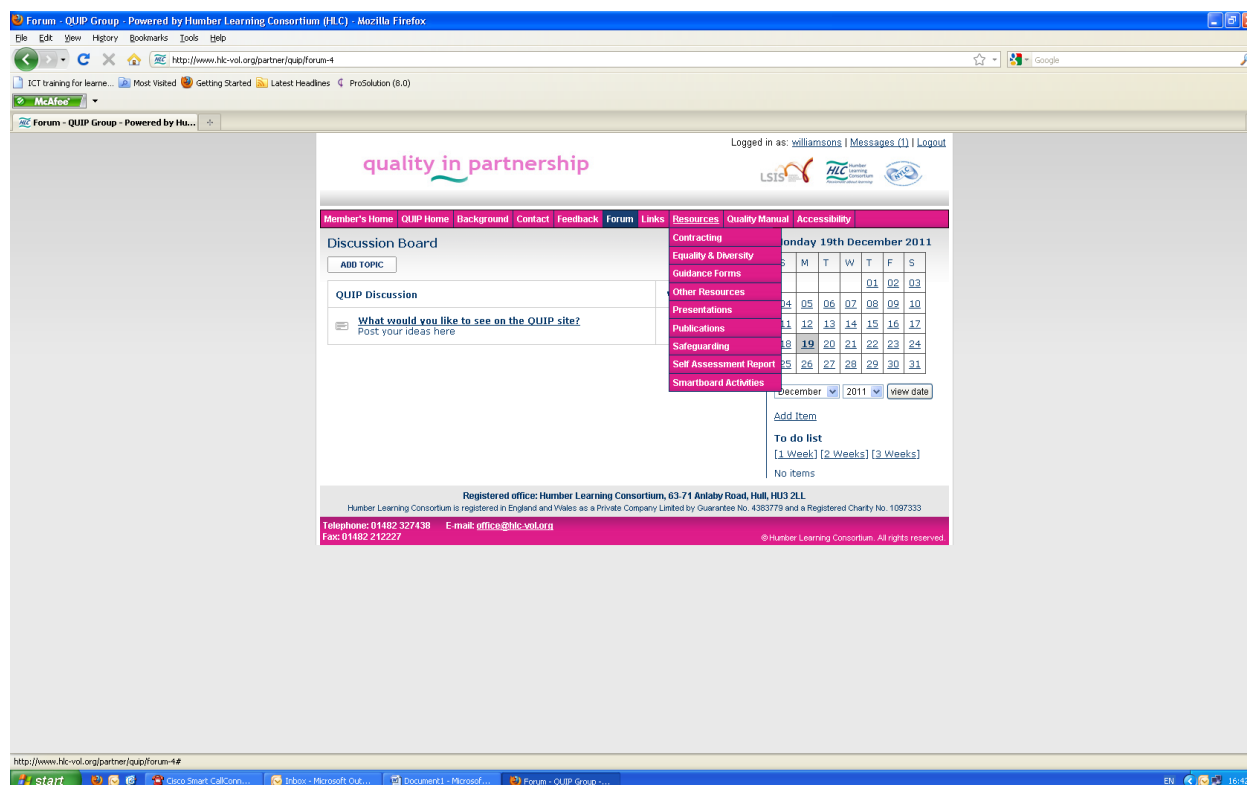


Figure iii



Figure iv

