

Preparing for functional skills in apprenticeships

Hillingdon Training Limited



The context

Hillingdon Training Limited (HTL) was set up to deliver high quality work-based training for the benefit of residents and employers in the Hillingdon area. In recent years, the company has operated increasingly across the West London area. We deliver programmes in business administration, health and social care, customer service, supporting teaching and learning, hospitality, IT, construction, motor vehicle and sport. The company is known locally for its collaborative and supportive approach to its learners. HTL identified that improvements need to be made in order to optimise its achievement and success rates. We recognised that not all learning needs are effectively identified and addressed. Some work has been done to support English and maths needs, but this has been done by enlisting external contract staff and the finances to fund this have come out of the company.

Supported provider

Hillingdon Training Ltd:

- Sohail Oosman, Quality Manager

Improvement partner

Four Counties Training:

- Joyce Dargie, Senior Consultant,

Working with Four Counties Training (FCT), we focussed on two key aspects:

- our strategy for developing a whole organisational approach to English and maths;
- embedding English and Maths in vocational teaching and learning.

Planned outcomes

To:

- produce a functional skills strategy and implementation plan;
- develop staff awareness of functional skills so that we are able to embed English and maths into vocational schemes of work and lesson plans;
- launch a pilot programme;
- bring English and maths support in house.

Successful use of in-class mentoring

During learning sessions Joyce visited teachers who were piloting functional skills to give them feedback and support. The teachers found this a very useful process. We have seen clear improvements as a result. In particular, we have seen a greater focus by teachers on learning, rather than teaching. For example, individual progress is checked more carefully and more active learning approaches are used.

Making progress

Within a few months of working with our improvement partner we were successfully accessing ALS funding, enabling the proper resourcing of support for learners.

FCT has provided copies of policies and procedures to help us develop our own versions. We have gained an understanding of the practicalities of maths and English teaching by looking at the schemes of work, lesson plans and contextualised materials that our improvement partner uses. Observation visits have given us a vision of what we are aiming towards.

We have launched our first, in-house maths programme, delivered by a freelance trainer. This is the first step towards delivery by HTL staff themselves. We are now planning to use co-teaching to develop staff confidence and skills.

A productive partnership

Through the support programme, FCT has gained an important contact in north-west London which could be used to build partnership work in the future. HTL has already made referrals to FCT in cases where FCT provides a service that HTL does not offer at present.

Our tips for a successful improvement project

- Tailor the support to the specific needs of the supported organisation.
- Agree the action plan for the improvement programme with senior managers at the outset.
- Be realistic about what can be achieved.

The impact

“The LSIS funding has enabled Hillingdon Training to take a strategic approach to developing and following a plan that will enable us to effectively embrace functional skills when it replaces key skills in apprenticeships from September 2012. The support provided by FCT has been very personalised and tailored to meet our needs. The expertise of FCT staff has enabled us to move forward with our vision and work towards having a positive impact on learners in training with us.”

Sohail Oosman