

LSIS Supported Provider Collaborative Development projects

LSIS funded Apprenticeship projects

Provider end of project report: July 2012

Project Title: Developing a suite of resources for the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management

Section 1: Introduction

Outline of own organisation, provider partners, and the project aims and objectives.

The following partners were involved in this project, with The Careers Exchange as the lead.

The Careers Exchange: a private training company specialising in Skills for Life and Functional Skills.

Niceday Accountancy: a small accountancy firm moving into delivering Accountancy Apprenticeships.

United Multi Cultural Centre (UMCC): a longstanding community organisation working primarily with black, minority and ethnic groups to deliver training.

Sector Solutions: a charity providing support to socially and economically disadvantaged people.

Rathbone: a UK wide voluntary youth sector organisation providing opportunities for young people to transform their life circumstances by reengaging with learning, discovering their ability to succeed and achieving progression to higher education, training and employment.

The Learning Community: a small not for profit organisation providing free training for disadvantaged learners cross South Yorkshire.

Fair Train: the Group Training Association (GTA) for the voluntary sector. A not for profit organisation encouraging employers to offer Apprenticeships by helping them access and manage training for apprentices.

The Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management is a new framework for the third sector. The project aim was to produce an easily customisable set of resources, fully mapped to EDEXCEL¹ specification, for use with this new

¹ EDEXCEL as of November 2012 is the only awarding organisation offering this qualification

framework. This included schemes of work, session plans and resources for rollout nationally through the Excellence Gateway. The second part of the project was to trial the materials produced with learners to gauge their effectiveness, and make any necessary adjustments.

All the partner organisations had their own role to play during the project.

- The Careers Exchange was assigned the overall project leader.
- The Learning Community and Fair Train were tasked with producing session plans.
- Rathbone were responsible for developing learner materials.
- Niceday and the UMCC were responsible for providing feedback.
- Sector Solutions were tasked with creating the scheme of work.

There were clear activities and milestones for each part of the project and we used a 'critical friend' process to evaluate progress. We are clear this mix worked and that we can develop further networking and collaborate opportunities.

How and why did the project emerge?

The Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management is a new framework for the third sector. There were clear indications that there was a need for materials to support this framework.

Section 2: Activities

Who has been involved?

A summary of what has happened so far?

So far, for both parts of the project, we have developed a complete set of materials and session plans for the mandatory units for the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management as well as a complete scheme of work comprising all mandatory and optional units. We have also trialled the materials with a small group of learners working within organisations that use volunteers, and informally in-house.

It was not necessary to alter our plans for the project at any point, as all providers worked well collaboratively. The outputs that we produced were in line with our action plan and project brief as outlined in the contract.

Unfortunately, during the project, many of our partner organisations experienced funding reductions, and had to make staffing changes. This limited the amount of hours that each organisation could dedicate to the project. Fortunately, these challenges were overcome without alteration to the project.

The main outcomes of our original project - to create schemes of work, session plans and materials - are now complete. Our extension to trial the materials is still in its early stages though, as the Apprenticeship programme

is a minimum of twelve months delivery. We will have a better understanding of the effectiveness of the produced materials nearer the end of the programme, which will be in May and June 2013. During this trial period, we will continue to amend the materials in line with learner, tutor and assessor feedback.

Were changes made to plans during the project? If so, why were these necessary?

The project met the milestones and no changes were necessary.

Section 3: Working in partnership

How easy was it to establish the partnership?

How effectively did the partners work together?

Were there any issues to overcome? If so, how was this done?

The project aimed to create and trial a complete set of schemes of work, session plans and materials that all fully map to the EDEXCEL specification. EDEXCEL at the time of writing is the only awarding organisation who offers this qualification. We have achieved these targets and, with our extension, have been able to trial the materials with a small number of learners. During this period, through learner feedback and feedback from the other partner organisations, it was apparent that some of the resources produced did not allow for a variation in learning and teaching styles. Some of the materials were amended to be less “chalk and talk.”

Each of the partner organisations bringing a different skill set helped the project and we all worked to our own strengths. The outcomes of the project were achieved through collaborative working. The timescales were often tight and during busy periods for most of our partner organisations as well as us. Many of the partner organisations are small voluntary community service (VCS) organisations or third sector organisations. Having the time to meet was often challenging.

However, we managed to overcome this mostly by having a group dropbox, which we could all work on simultaneously and be accessible to partner organisations. We started by individually working on our own separate components of the project, but as we progressed and more documents were produced, people were often using incorrect versions and this led to a few moments of confusion within the preliminary stages of development. With the group dropbox, this challenge was removed and productivity and ease of collaborative working was greatly improved.

What advice would you give to providers in future projects, which are new to partnership working?

Up to three key points

- Ensure there is a clear project plan.
- Agree milestones.
- Agree roles and responsibilities.

Section 4: Impact

What has changed? What difference has the project made?

The project will offer learners the chance to gain a new qualification and to further increase their learning and skills. It will provide cohesive support for organisations that use volunteer staff and also allow better management practice to propagate into an area of the labor market, where traditionally mid-level management has not been prolific.

Other providers will benefit from the resources and delivery models. Providers will also benefit from the wealth of knowledge that working in collaboration with other providers brings to an organisation. The impact of collaborative working with such a wide range of organisations both local and national was of great benefit. It has provided us all with a great wealth of knowledge and experience of the variation across the sector in general.

Are there any measures that demonstrate the impact the project has had?

We are awaiting learner satisfaction surveys as the learner reviews are only just due, and we can supply these as soon as they are available. These will be early reviews as the programme is not yet halfway through. We intend to conduct a final learner survey in May - June 2013.

Were there any unintended outcomes from the project?

There have been no unintended outcomes identified so far.

Section 5: Success and challenges

What have been the key achievements?

- Signing up our first cohort of Advanced Apprenticeships in Volunteer Management.
- Developing a complete set of materials and session plans for the mandatory units for the Level 3 Volunteer Management Apprenticeship.
- Developing a complete scheme of work comprising all mandatory and optional units.
- Trialling materials with a small group of learners working within organisations that use volunteers, and informally in-house.

What has been critical to the project's success (*up to three things*)?

- Collaborative working.
- Funding.
- The awarding organisation's recognition of the need to offer qualifications which make up the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management framework

What have been the key challenges (*up to three*) and how were they addressed?

One of the main challenges that we faced during both stages of the project was being able to get all partner organisations to meet, face to face. Being geographically disparate and having other work during a busy period, it was difficult to agree on dates and hosted venues. We overcame this by using webinars. Partners had previously taken part in webinars. Most of us had only been passive in our usage. Actively participating and hosting a webinar was a challenge for most of us, let alone being fraught with a series of technical issues. We found the webinar platform to be initially quite awkward. Eventually we settled and found it to be a very productive platform for collaborative working, as webinars could be “squeezed in” relatively easily for partners.

A further challenge was getting EDEXCEL centre approval for smaller partners as this awarding organisation limits the approvals, if learner numbers are small. We are in negotiation for dispensation in this instance.

Section 6: Resources produced by the project
What resources have been created to share?

- Schemes of work for the mandatory units of the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management.
- Lesson and activity plans for the mandatory units of the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management.
- Teaching and learning materials for mandatory and optional units of the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management.

Who are they for?

Practitioners and learners in work based learning settings can use this suite of resources when working on the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Volunteer Management framework.

How could they be used?

Practitioners and managers can adapt the suite of resources for other pathways within this sector framework.

Section 7: Future planning

What plans do you have for building on the work/outcomes of this project?

We will continue to develop the materials in line with learner feedback provided by those who are trialling the Apprenticeship. As the materials were designed to be easily adaptable, we would like to adapt them for specific contexts as outlined below.

We would like to be able to extend the project to develop a more

contextualized version of the materials. The aim of the project was to create an easily adaptable set of resources that could be transferred to any given voluntary organisation. Originally we were looking at the project from the view point of charity shops which use volunteers, extending to brown sign sites and hospices.

**What plans, if any, are in place to continue working as a partnership?
How is the work of this project sustainable within the lead organisation
and in the partner organisations?**

Throughout the project our partners and we have been talking to other companies and there is a lot of interest from cultural organisations. An art gallery has enquired about tailoring the Managing Volunteers Apprenticeship resources to a specific cultural context.

It is because of this labour market intelligence that that we want to develop a specific context for the Level 3 Managing Volunteers Apprenticeship, with a targeted materials framework for Art and Culture.

Section 8: Contact details

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No ☐

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