

LSIS funded Pilot Support Projects Pre-employment project

PROVIDER END OF PROJECT REPORT

Project Title: Pre-employment provision readiness audit and webinars

Section 1: Introduction

Project aim

To provide online and telephone support for providers to self-assess their readiness to undertake pre-employment provision and to share information on key topics.

Project objectives

The project supported providers to:

- assess their current provision in relation to local and national needs for pre-employment programmes;
- assess their current readiness to meet the needs of unemployed learners, both young and adult learners;
- use new media and digital inclusion to support infrastructure developments that are time and cost efficient;
- plan activities that will support more effective consultation with stakeholders;
- plan curriculum delivery models and methods that better suit the needs of stakeholders; and
- use online materials that role model new ways of delivering training.

Project summary (approximately 50 words)

This project was established in response to the Unwin¹ report which identified that Colleges may not be providing appropriate job-readiness skills. We used an online self-assessment tool for Colleges to benchmark their service, a written report and coaching support to follow up on the on line audit tool and webinars to provide information and ideas for service improvement.

¹ It's about work...Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning, Commission of Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning, 2013

Section 2: Activities

Who has been involved in delivering the project?

Members of the AoC-Create team worked together to design and test an online audit tool, to design and deliver webinar materials, to test out a new webinar platform and to provide telephone feedback and coaching to participants.

Members of the Group Training Associations (GTA) England provided critical friend support for the design phase. Colleagues at Gloucestershire College took part in a support webinar to share their experiences of running a similar project.

What pilot activity has taken place so far?

All intended activity has taken place. This includes:

- the development, testing and roll out of an online audit tool, for organisations to self-assess their readiness and capability to support unemployed learners to gain appropriate skills;
- follow-up consultancy phone calls to discuss the results of the online audit tool;
- delivery of webinars offering guidance, support and tips on meeting the needs of unemployed learners and engaging employers for progression purposes. Providers chose which webinars to join based on the results of the online audit tool;
- providing electronic links to recorded webinars to all participants; and
- follow-up remote coaching session for a limited number of providers to focus on development areas and to action plan further.

How many providers have been supported?

Fourteen providers have been supported as part of this project.

How many individuals have been supported?

Sixteen individuals have been supported as part of this project, as staff from different parts of the organisation accessed the webinars and coaching support.

What feedback have you received from participants?

The online audit tool was well-received as it gave people a way of assessing what areas needed to be developed. Similarly, the reports and consultancy feedback were seen as useful and accurate. Participants felt that it was a fair reflection of their position and served as a useful summary for planning purposes.

There were some technical problems for participants who had not used webinars before such as not turning on their speakers or dialing in without activating the audio function, and participants said that this had been useful in itself. They were able to make mistakes as part of the pilot so would know what to look out for themselves if they ran webinars.

Some participants wanted more consultancy support as they found this particularly useful. This was more so for organisations that had identified themselves as having difficulty with engaging the hardest to reach learners.

Direct quotes:

It's got me thinking (the survey) about what I need to do. What my team needs to do. It'll help me plan how we move forward.

The webinar was useful and I'd like access to the others once they're recorded.

It's given us so many ideas. Things that we could do to help us with the really difficult learners and employers.

Now that I've been involved in a webinar, I'm interested in using them to support my team who work away from the main centre. Can you support me to do that?

What have been the main challenges (up to three) and how have you overcome these challenges?

1. The initial take up was much slower than anticipated. It appeared that sending out a generic email did not work because there has been so much staff turnover recently. Emails were not going to the right people. Also, College staff are inundated with emails and this often went to the bottom of the pile. We undertook follow up emails and then telephone calls. It was the latter that generated more responses. It seems that if you are known to an individual or you persevere with phone calls this generates a better response.
2. Setting up webinars took time as we had to feel confident with the stability and functionality of the webinar platform we chose. We worked with an external IT support team and set up multiple practise webinars to identify potential problems. As a result, we did not use the video function as this ran the risk of losing connection. There is also a time lag in live webinars between a participant 'raising their hand' or 'sending a message' and it appearing on the screen. This can interrupt the flow of the webinar.
3. Follow up phone calls took much longer than expected and required multiple call backs for some people. We used additional follow up emails and reminders about webinars, plus daily call backs to over come this but it was much more time consuming than anticipated.

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

1. Having the time and resources to test out the webinar platform and concept.
2. Using personal contacts and repeated follow up emails and calls (that were friendly rather than nagging!)

Section 3: Impact

Please summarise any evidence of impact that the pilot activity has generated so far (eg increased staff knowledge and skills, behavioural change, changes in practice, organisational change) for:

- **learners** - it is not possible to judge impact except to say that raised awareness of different ways of working should lead to improvements in delivery, curriculum planning and learner feedback.
- **provider staff** - comments from providers indicated that the webinars and coaching were particularly helpful in generating ideas for future improvements in service.
- **employers** - it is not possible to judge impact except to say that raised awareness of different ways of working should lead to improvements in communication with employers, more inclusion of employers in the planning and feedback processes.
- **your organisation** - the pilot has provided staff with skills in developing online audit tools, planning and delivering webinars and a better understanding of the need to target support through a data cleansing activity.

If impact is not measurable so far, how could this be followed up?

One of the most frequently expressed views by participants was that they would like to establish a community of practice to share ideas and impacts. This could be done through the AoC Moodle, supported by further webinars on key topics.

We could also undertake another online audit activity in three months to ask for examples of how the work has been used or embedded.

Section 4: Resources produced by the project

What resources have been created to share?

	File name	Descriptor of resource <i>i.e. lesson plan, trainer notes, training needs analysis, toolkit, online survey etc</i>	Who is the resource for? <i>i.e. teacher trainer, support staff, practitioners, employers etc</i>	How can the resource be used?
1.	AoC-Create project report	Final project report	Managers and teachers	To provide project background, impact to date and a summary of resources.
2.	(2) Audit tool invite with electronic link	Link to Audit tool	Managers	To undertake research and encourage providers to self-assess

3.	Webinar invite	Email invitation with links to three webinars	Managers and teachers	Research
4.	(4) Webinar presentation – Using blended learning in pre employment provision (4a) Webinar script – Using blended learning in pre employment provision	PowerPoint Script Webinar	Managers and teachers	Planning CPD
5.	(5) Webinar presentation – Course design in pre employment provision (5a) Webinar script - Course design in pre employment provision	PowerPoint Script Webinar	Managers and teachers	Planning CPD
6.	(6) Webinar presentation - Using blended learning to deliver embedded functional skills (6a) Webinar script - Using blended learning to deliver embedded functional skills	PowerPoint Script Webinar	Managers and teachers	Planning CPD

You may wish to start with viewing the three presentations. If you are interested in one or more of the presentation topics, then access the webinar scripts as they provide further detail.

Section 5: Recommendations for the project

How can the pilot activity and resources be useful to other providers?

There are some key lessons in the pilot project, particularly around engaging participants and the amount of time needed to follow up with individuals. The webinar material can also be used by Colleges for CPD and to generate new ways of working.

Section 6: Future planning

What plans does your organisation have for building on the work/outcomes of this project?

The webinars have proved to be a useful tool for providing an alternative to face-to-face events which are costly and time consuming. We will use more webinars in future to supplement our service to the sector.

We will undertake a data cleansing exercise to review the contacts we have for this type of provision.

We will consider establishing a community of practice to support providers who would like to share best practice and to discuss concerns in a professional forum. This may be supported by regular webinars to generate ideas and build a discourse of improvement.

Section 7: Contact details

Name of organisation: AoC Create

Name of Project Lead: Bev Morris

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Please confirm that you and your organisation agree that LSIS may put this report and listed resources on the Excellence Gateway

(double click in box below)

Yes ☒

No ☐

May we include your contact details in the report for the Excellence Gateway?

(double click in box below)

Yes ☒

No ☐