

## **Participant pack**

# **Mind the gap! Employers: Identifying skills gaps**

## **Module 2**

### **Handouts**

- HO 1: English, maths and business
- HO 2: Action plan
- HO 3: The learning journey
- HO 4: North West Skills Award criteria mapping
- HO 5: Burnley Council's Learning and Development Representative model

### **PowerPoint slide notes**

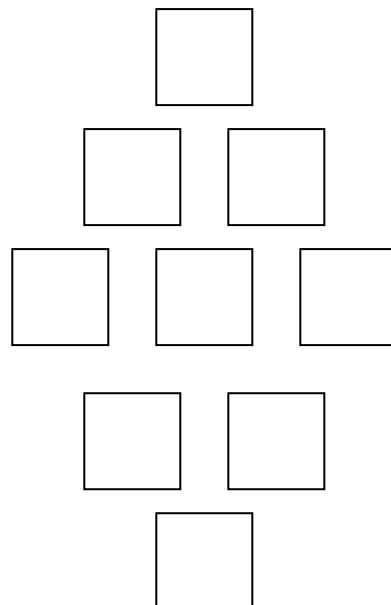
## HO 1: English, maths and business

### Business performance, English and maths

Lay the 12 cards face up on the table; they describe elements of business performance. Discuss in your group how you would like to see performance improved through better skills.

Choose (from the 12 elements shown) nine which you think would help your business most. Then discuss how you think better employee / worker English and maths skills would help to improve these elements.

Finally prioritise the nine cards: highest priority being the element which would most benefit from improved employee skills in English and / or maths. To prioritise the cards, lay them out in the following diamond-shaped formation:



**LOW PRIORITY** (would benefit least from improved English and maths)

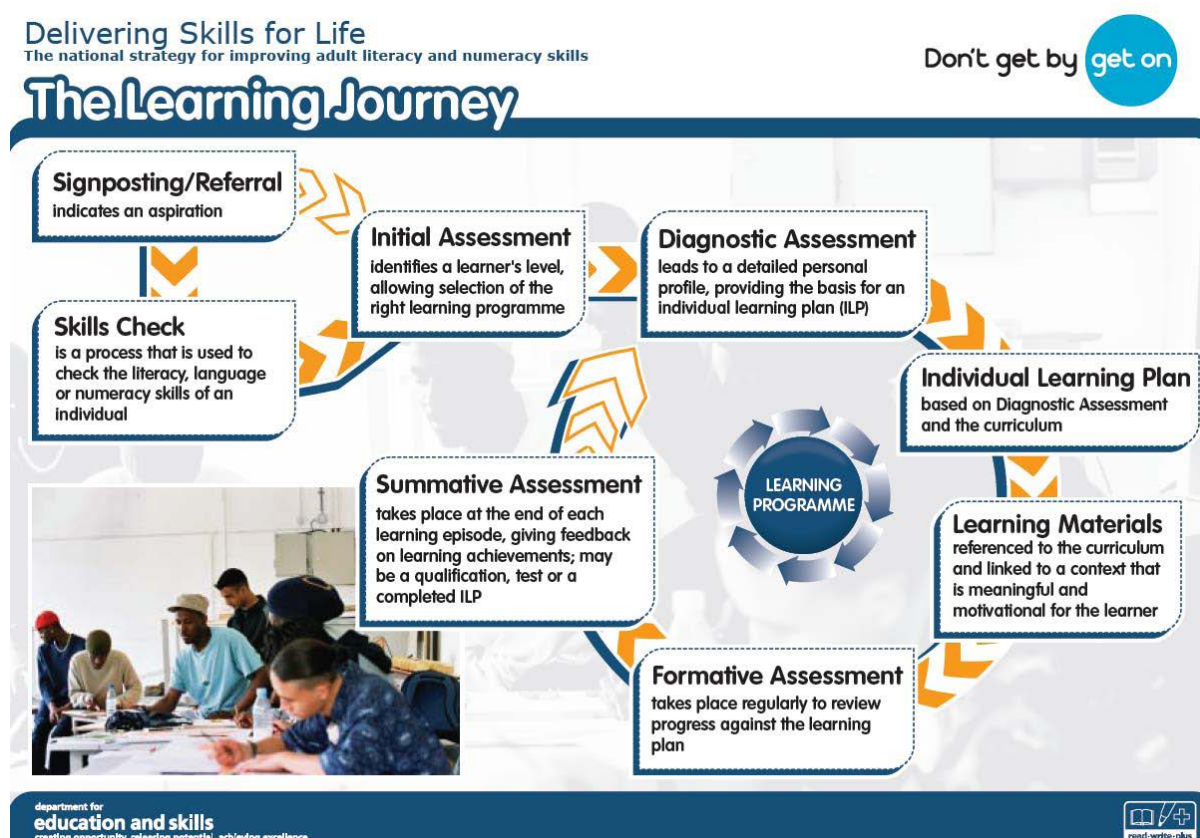
## HO 2: Action plan

Activity	Key tasks	People to involve	Timescale
<b>Introduction: Why and how?</b>			
<b>What do we mean? Purposes of assessment</b>			
<b>How? Evaluating the resources</b>			
<b>When and where are the opportunities?</b>			
<b>Who? What makes an effective learner champion?</b>			
<b>How do we keep doing it?</b>			

## HO 3

### The learning journey

These early stages of assessment form part of the fuller process of the learning journey, shown in the diagram below.



Source: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)

The first four stages of assessment are considered here.

#### 1. Signposting / referral (including self-referral)

***'Does the learner recognise that they may benefit from brushing up their English or maths skills?'***

This stage does not strictly speaking fall within the assessment cycle, but learners will often self-assess as potentially benefitting from English or maths skills development after being introduced to suitable engagement material, such as promotional materials, taster sessions at events such as a Learning at Work Day, and quizzes.

## **2. Skills check**

***‘Does the learner have a need to improve their English or maths skills?’***

A skills check is a short process that is used to find out whether someone would benefit from brushing up their literacy, language or numeracy. It is used to identify learners who might benefit from more in-depth assessment of their skills. The process usually takes about ten minutes. The person carrying out the skills check needs to be appropriately trained, but does not need to be a specialist English or maths teacher.

## **3. Initial assessment**

***‘What level is the learner at?’***

Initial assessment will help identify a learner’s level of skills against national standards. Many learners have different levels of each component part of reading, writing and numeracy skills, presenting with a ‘spiky profile’ – for example more confident with reading than with writing. Providers should use whichever initial assessment materials best suit their learners, and the initial assessment should be carried out by someone who is appropriately trained, but they do not need to be a specialist English or maths teacher.

## **4. Diagnostic assessment**

***‘What specific skills does the learner need to improve?’***

Diagnostic assessment takes place once a learner is on a learning programme. The diagnostic assessment will be carried out by a qualified English or maths specialist. The diagnostic assessment identifies a learner’s strengths and highlights any skills gaps and is used to plan their learning programme.

Contact the UK Qualifications and Skills Team (UKQST) on <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/57> for information and guidance on training and professional qualifications.

## **HO 4: North West Skills Award criteria mapping**

You may find this information useful to support the activity in this session. The following are criteria taken from the North West Skills Award assessment framework. In order to achieve this award, authorities must demonstrate that they have met all criteria (40 in total). The criteria reflect proven successful approaches to embedding skills development, including provision for developing English and maths skills, across the whole organisation.

### **1. Whole organisation approach to workforce planning and skills development (including English, maths and ESOL)**

1.1) Is there evidence of a strategic approach to workforce planning and skills development?

1.2) Is there a commitment to workforce planning and skills development at all organisational levels?

1.3) Do key HR policies and procedures (e.g. relating to performance management, appraisal and training) address workforce planning and skills development issues (including English, maths and ESOL)?

1.4) Are processes relating to performance management, appraisal and training, incorporated within workforce plans and other strategic plans?

### **2. Developing a strategy for the Authority**

2.1) Is there a skills strategy which is agreed and promoted?

2.2) Is there a clear statement of intent in relation to skills development for all staff, which is agreed and published?

2.3) Are appropriate mechanisms in place which provide ownership of the skills strategy?

2.5) Is there a mechanism in place which supports the implementation of the skills strategy?

### **3. Developing appropriate staff within the organisation to support skills development (including English, maths and ESOL)**

3.1) Are processes in place, which ensure that managers across the organisation understand the link between developing the skills of the whole workforce (including English, maths and ESOL) and the success of the organisation?

3.2) Are learning champions active across the organisation?

3.3) Skills supporters (union learning reps, mentors, supervisors) are able to access and attend appropriate CPD events, specifically those related to English, maths and ESOL.

3.5) Have staff who support English, maths and ESOL learners achieved an appropriate Level 2 qualification or part thereof as appropriate to their job role (see also 5.3).

#### **4. Demonstrate that implementation involves working in partnership (e.g. with union learning representatives and providers**

4.2) Learning representatives are working effectively across strategic and operational levels.

#### **5. Appropriate identification and meeting of skills development needs (including English, maths and ESOL) as part of workforce planning**

5.1) Is the identification and meeting of skills development needs incorporated within all processes including eg redeployment and Induction procedures and linked to workforce planning?

5.2) Is skills development embedded within training and performance management systems e.g. appraisal and linked to workforce planning.

5.3) Identified key staff have achieved an appropriate Level 2 qualification or part thereof as appropriate to their job role.

5.5) Is a process in place across the organisation to identify skills development needs, with specific priority given to identifying English, maths and ESOL needs at the earliest possible stage?

5.4) Appropriate systems are in place across the organisation to follow up on skills check / review outcomes.

## HO 5

### **Burnley Council**

### **Learning and Development Representative role description**

#### **Role description and purpose**

To be the service unit contact for Learning and Development related activity, including liaison regarding the Service Learning and Development plan, advertising training course vacancies, recruitment and selection for ad hoc courses, evaluations and other council Learning and Development events.

#### **Specific functions**

1. To attend Training Representative forums
2. To attend training related to the role
3. To design, develop and progress a work plan linked to Investors in People and Corporate Learning and Development activity and Team Burnley Performance
4. To be the main contact in own Service Unit for Learning and Development activity
5. To carry out questionnaires, update Learning and Development procedures, communicate Learning and Development opportunities to managers and staff in unit
6. To advertise and recruit delegates for ad hoc training
7. To be involved in and promote Learning and Development events
8. To be involved in any new staff induction for own Service Unit
9. To be involved in the new HR system developments related to Learning and Development.

#### **Specific requirements of role holder**

- A keen interest in learning and development activity
- Ability to communicate with a range of staff in own service unit
- Time to devote to the task (up to 1 day per month)
- Positive attitude to change and development
- Ability to deliver key messages at staff meetings

#### **Training and support available**

Role holders will be given support and guidance from the Organisational Development Officer and their Head of Service / manager

Role holders will be trained in learning styles; methodology; evaluation techniques and Corporate Learning and Development functions and practices and presentation skills where appropriate.

Role holders will be influential in shaping future Learning and Development activity and involvement and key players in moving towards a Learning Organisation.

For more information please contact xxxx.




## PowerPoint slide notes



**Support for English, maths and ESOL**


**Mind the gap**  
**Employers: identifying skills gaps**



**Welcome!**

Please introduce yourself to a colleague or two and locate a set of cards on the table.

Looking at the cards, discuss each of the elements of business performance and consider which of these would be improved by better English and maths skills.



**Aim**

To explore ways to increase employee / worker engagement and referral to English, maths and ESOL provision (including functional skills and within apprenticeships)

## Outcomes



- To develop an understanding of existing English and maths assessment and screening tools and approaches
- To explore ways of identifying English and maths skills gaps within their organisation
- To share good practice in developing effective referral systems in the workplace

## What's the problem?



- 57% of working age population have skills at Level 2 or above in literacy (44% in 2003)
- 76% of us have skills at Entry 3 or above in numeracy (79% in 2003!)
- 10% of us have skills below Level 1 literacy AND below Entry 3 numeracy
- And only 19% of us have skills at Level 2 or above in both literacy and numeracy.

Source: Skills for Life Survey of Needs (2011) BIS

## Why? And how?



Working in groups of 3 or 4, share your ideas about **why** you would strive to engage employees in checking their English, maths or ESOL skills. Write each of these on a piece of scrap paper on the table and stick them on the 'Why?' flipchart.

Now consider your current practice. Write down **how** your organisation currently engages employees in checking their skills, and stick these on the 'How?' flipchart.

## Purposes of assessment



Type of assessment	Purpose
Signposting / self-referral	Learner identifies need (self-assessment)
Skills check	To identify a need
Initial assessment	To identify the level
Diagnostic assessment	For detailed identification of skills profile

Visit the [iRoute](#) for information on positive engagement

## How? Evaluating the resources



1. Spend 10 minutes with your group at each table.
2. As a group, evaluate the resources and anything you have used in your provision.
3. Decide on ONE preferred resource and agree the target audience and context in which you would or have used it, to feedback to the whole group.
4. Repeat with the other two tables.
5. Take note of any additional resources you may want to use on your recording sheet.

## When and where are the opportunities?



In the next 20 minutes...

1. Form three groups.
2. Read your 'theme'. Each theme represents a proven vehicle for embedding skills checks.
3. Appoint a scribe / artist and spokesperson.
4. Sketch out an 'ideal' model (use the prompts provided if useful).
5. Be prepared to feed back to the whole group.

### Key elements for successful use of learning champions



- Give them a clearly defined role
- Give them something in return
- Give them something to do
- Give them a reason to keep going

### How do we keep it going?



In pairs, and building on any of the ideas, approaches or resources you have experienced today, come up with one or two ways in which you can incorporate engagement activities and skills checks to promote long-term success in embedding English, maths or ESOL across your whole organisation.