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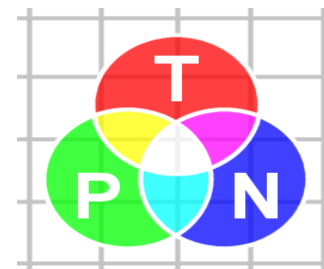
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Training Provider News



Literacy and Numeracy targets

Literacy and numeracy targets are here to stay... and they're going to get even bigger. The South West Skills for Life Unit will now explain why. It is difficult to remember how it felt when the South West was the pariah region as regards Skills for Life; the bottom of the pile by a long way.

Here we are, only three years later and we have come on in "leaps and bounds" – ahead of the targets with the highest rate of growth, the highest proportion of adult learners and the lowest level of 'other' provision of any region. Although it would be nice to think this was all down to the Skills for Life Unit, in reality it is those who have partnered us and supported our joint agenda that have really made the difference.

The South West Skills for Life Unit was set up three years ago with funding by the South West Regional Development Agency and the Learning and Skills Council. Our primary focus has been on activities that serve the whole of the region, having both a strategic and operational perspective.

We have endeavoured to inform, engage and enthuse others in order to stimulate demand from individuals, employees and employers. Our objectives have been to improve business competitiveness, address social imbalance and improve regional coherence within the regional Skills for Life strat-

egy. Through partnership working we have consistently promoted Skills for Life to learners, employers and communities and improved the delivery of Skills for Life qualifications by supporting the professional development of the teacher workforce.

One of the greatest challenges we have faced in the South West has been the increased demand in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) exacerbated by the changes in funding policy. No one could have foreseen the large numbers of migrant workers coming to the region and the subsequent extra burden placed on already pressurised funding. Together with changes to fee remission policies and an increased expectation on employer contributions, ESOL providers faced an unprecedented rise in issues and queries! The Unit was able to provide support and advice to colleagues both internally and externally in responding to these challenges.

So we are on course to meet the targets as laid out by the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001 – does that mean the job is done? Far from it. The Leitch report published in December 2006 shed a whole new (and brighter) light on the task that lies ahead for UK plc. Many individuals have already taken steps to improve their levels of

maths and English and profit from the many associated benefits, e.g. enhanced confidence and self-esteem, access to further learning opportunities, an up-to-date CV, ability to help with their kids' homework and career progression. However there are many, many more individuals that need to take that "step" in order to gain similar benefits.

Leitch's ambition is that the UK should commit to becoming a "world leader in skills" by 2020, i.e. 95% of the working age population to achieve functional literacy (Level 1) and numeracy (Entry Level 3), up from 85% and 79% respectively in 2005. This equates to a total of 7.4 million adult attainments by 2020. In the South West we have a milestone for 2011 of approximately 150,000 achievements and after that we know that the only way is up, all the way to 2020!

So now, more than ever, we need to combine efforts to meet the task that lies ahead. However, thanks to the commitment that we have all made in terms of our capability and capacity to address skills gaps in literacy, we can be confident that we are in a position to tackle those challenges.

Keep posted on www.skillsforlife-sw.org.uk.

Where are we now with Leitch?

Training Providers were understandably cautious in the way we reacted to the Leitch report, largely because we had experienced the same build up with Tomlinson only for Ruth Kelly to knock it flat. However Leitch has not gone away. This time the government has been true to its word and kept the focus on skills and training throughout the past year. Leitch is central to its thinking in this field and changes of government aside it is important that we appreciate that many of its recommendations are going to come to fruition.

Leitch focuses on what we have failed to deliver, reflecting where the gaps are in the economy

The Key National Targets by 2020:

- 95% of adults to have the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy (IN SW 75% & 72%)
- 90%+ of adults to have at least a level 2 qualification 69% in 2005
- 1.9m more people to have achieved a level 3 qualification
- 500,000 people in an apprenticeship a year
- More than 40% of all adults to have a HE qualification

However the key points are that since 70% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their statutory education, so it is really about training adults not youngsters. Add that currently 1 in 6 of all workers in the country were born outside of the UK, then one sees other challenges which will have a big impact.

But why should things change?

Why should employers start to engage with Colleges and Training Providers? The new UK Commission for Employment and Skills will be fully operational by 2008 and is targeted with rationalising the existing system, linking to the SSC's focusing the employer's influence. Chris Humphries appointment moving from City & Guilds has to be good news, but he is acutely aware of the size of the task facing him. His well known passion to introduce unitisation will be an interesting as-

pect of his work.

Ultimately we need to build employer confidence in the qualifications and learning programmes provided by universities, colleges and training providers, and theoretically open the door to increased employer investment in skills.

John Denham's plan to accredit the better in house company training schemes again adds an other variable.

The introduction of the Skills Pledge as a voluntary employer commitment to utilising government funding to access the training of all their eligible employees to level 2. The question has to be will this really influence SME's and Micros as well as the bigger employers who are the ones who have signed up, it is a challenge facing all of us?

Similarly we are going to have to raise the aspirations of individuals where training is concerned. In order to increase peoples aspirations it will be necessary to raise awareness of the economic value of skills to them and their families. To establish the link between skills and wages amongst the workforce, possibly not just doing this on a monthly salary comparison, but looking at the difference in what they can hope to earn over a lifetime. A sustained high profile awareness programme is needed which seeks to break down the silos which exist between the different sectors in the market place.

So what are the major issues to emerge from Leitch for the delivery side? Central to this is the growth of Train to Gain. Although in the launch of Train to Gain we did not initially highlight enough the key theme that is was not simply about free level 2's or 3's but more fundamentally about developing a working relationship between providers and employers which would greatly increase all levels of training, with both Government Funded and Full Cost Recovery work taking place. The programme requires a new focus on employers with a marked

shift away from a focus on the learner towards one on the employer. Those who have previously been involved in Government funded programmes have always had to carry out detailed learner satisfaction monitoring to meet LSC and OfSted requirements. With the focus switching increasingly to employers, this has changed, the emergence of the Employer Responsiveness and Vocational Excellence programme (SWAN for short) is increasingly making providers aware of the new requirements. A part of the challenge is that employers and their staff do not necessarily want the same thing a dilemma which has already led to some issues in inspection.

For providers there are often some staff issues, the shift away from delivering 'off the shelf' government funded programmes to delivering bespoke employer funded ones isn't one which staff are necessarily capable of. Consequently the need to audit both the skills the staff possess and their currency is critical. Facing such a diverse market places, with diplomas, Learning Agreements, activity agreements, a wide range of apprenticeships, train to Gain, Technical certificates, in house accredited qualifications and increasing bespoke work it is immediately obvious that senior managers of training providers have to make strategic decisions as to where they want to position their companies in this new market place. The need to specialise is apparent to everyone, but the where and in what can only be decided on after a lot of honest self reflection and a careful assessment of that part of the market.

It is no co-incidence that there has been so much emphasis on supporting leadership and management development lately. In order to move through these new waters it is important for our managers to have a good grasp of the situation and to be able to make decisions from a position of strength, rather than simply reacting in the short term to the plethora of changes going around us. We need all the support we can get to plan a course for the next few years.

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Apprentice Employer of the Year Awards

The search is on for the nation's top apprentice employers with the LSC's fifth annual Apprenticeship Awards sponsored by City & Guilds. Employers of all sizes and from all sectors are encouraged to enter.

The awards are held annually to celebrate the success of apprentices who have made a real difference to their own future and to the organisation they work for. They also recognise the work of employers who are successfully tackling skills shortages to build their future workforce through Apprenticeships.

The awards highlight the popularity of Apprenticeships amongst employers of all sizes, with past winners including British Gas, BT and tiny firms such as Beere Electrical Services Ltd. Employers are eligible to enter for one of four categories depending on their size: Micro (1-9 employees), Small (10-49 employees), Medium (50- 249 employees) and Large (250 + employees). They are assessed on a number of criteria including implementation of the Apprenticeship programme, clear demonstration of the way Apprenticeships have benefited their business and the level of support provided.

To enter the Awards, or for more, visit apprenticeships.org.uk/awards or call 0800 954 8896. The deadline for entries is February 29th 2008. The Apprenticeship Awards will be held on 10th July at the Royal Horticultural Halls in central London.

It would be good to see some of the excellent employers we work with the South West being entered and hopefully gaining real recognition by reaching the finals and even winning some of the awards. It's over to you the providers to move this forward.

The Young Apprenticeships Programme

The recent report by Ofsted into the Young Apprenticeship programme, launched in September 2004, has said that the quality of the programme has improved considerably. They state that the programme has achieved 'pretty decent results in all 14 partnerships inspected in 2006/7'. This builds on the solid improvements made during 2005/6. In all but two partnerships in 2006/7 there has been no underachievement and students were on track to achieve level 2 qualifications.

The provision of opportunities for independent learning and team working has been the most improved aspect of teaching and learning, with marked improvement in curriculum programmes, links with and the impression of employers, advice and guidance, recruitment, selection procedures and training of staff, communication and lastly leadership and management.

The one cause for concern was the recommendation that more

must be done to tackle gender stereotyping on some vocational courses. It was deemed to be persistent throughout the programme though it was stated that there had been some exceptions, one being in one construction course.

The sharing of good practice amongst providers who are delivering this programme is something the network is keen to facilitate. Please contact Craig if you are interested.

Changes in Quality Support

Over the past few weeks we've had the announcement of the merger of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and the Centre of Excellence in Leadership (CEL,) a consultative prospectus on the nature of the body that should arise from their loins and a proposition for a further phase of development towards a self regulatory system for FE. These follow the legislating for intervention powers for the LSC in the recent Further Education and Training Act and confirmation from the Secretary of State in his AoC speech of the continued importance of the Framework for Excellence (FfE.) Pitch in the various criteria around Centres of Excellence and the new Responsiveness Standard and the strength of the wind becomes apparent.

The two core features at present, a new sector owned

quality body and self regulation, run in parallel; indeed it was the firing of the gun of the latter at last year's AoC conference that led to the announcement of a new body at this year's. Neither of the two existing two bodies has been around very long; in CEL's case four years, in that of QIA just a year and a half. It's not that they have failed to deliver, more a case that things have moved on around them. In hindsight for instance it does look a bit daft to have one body concentrating on quality and standards and one on excellence in leadership particularly when the drive is on to rationalise the number of bodies in the landscape and simplify where possible.

There had been some unease when QIA was first proposed by the Secretary of State in 2004, the case for another body not wholly proven. QIA has been careful to act as a hub of quality intelligence and a com-

missioner of good practice, not as an agent of interference and like CEL, its work has been generally well received but now the opportunity has arisen for the sector to design a model of its own, rather than have one imposed on it.

The new body may be similar in outlook, "*the new organisation's role*" it says in the consultation, "*will essentially be to commission, identify products and services needed and secure them at good value for money,*" but with at least one highly significant difference – it will be designed and steered from within the sector. "*We propose to ensure this (that's sector ownership) by giving colleges and providers the direct power through member's voting rights to nominate and elect a proportion of the board and to have a say on major issues of strategy.*" The new body will therefore not be a non departmental public body (NDPB) but a charity, funded through membership subscriptions and commissioned work.

NEW ESOL COURSE FOR THE WORKPLACE: "ENGLISH AT WORK"

Productive Skills for Devon has sponsored the development of a new short course in "English at Work" for work places in Devon. It is targeted at migrant workers who need to improve their language skills in order to communicate effectively and safely at work.

It is only a short course, but for that reason is likely to appeal to SMEs more than a commitment to full qualifications would. However it could be a useful "springboard" from which to launch the new ESOL at Work qualification (which will be eligible under Train to Gain from September 2008), the self-supported ICE materials from the Skills for Life Unit, or encouragement for individuals to join local adult edu-

cation classes.

This has now been developed by a partnership of providers and trialled in three businesses, with more to come. A DVD has been made to show the success of this and to encourage employers to take up the programme. It was shown at a breakfast event on 15 November attended by about 30 representatives of employers and providers, and there was strong interest.

A price has been recommended for the programme of £800, with the first ten employers to sign up getting it half price. For this they will get:

- Negotiation to adapt the programme to their needs

- Additional assessment of individuals at the start
- A 20 hour taught programme
- A PsfD Certificate for all who complete the programme
- A free Community Support programme for employees to get more support from public service agencies (currently run in Exeter)
- Advice on accessing qualifications and on using the ICE materials. Any employer who provides this programme for their staff will receive an Award of "Investor in English at Work in Devon". This will form the basis of a press release and hopefully some good pictures in the papers!

Any provider who would like to offer the programme is welcome to contact me on 01647 441050 or johnwillis@ukgateway.net.

Have you visited our website?

www.training-provider.com

DCTPN Meetings
10.00 – 2.00

11th January
St Loyes
Exeter

4th April
Cornwall

4th July
Bicton

3rd October
Plymouth

DCTPN
is

holding an

Institute for Learning

Training Session

on

CPD

Requirements

at

Exeter College

Tuesday 19th

February

Open to all

if interested

Contact Kerry

Plymouth Centre for

Faiths & Cultural

Diversity

Training day

14th January

on

'Issues of Belief, Faith and Culture in the Workplace'

01752 254438

pcfcd@plymouth.gov.uk

The following article has been written in response to a question from Craig's about – 'How did you get your ILT/E-Guides working?'

It is not presented as a quick fix, instant solution or even as a recommendation - it is merely the story of what we have tried to do. If you feel that some of it has a resonance with what you are hoping to achieve and we can help in any way at all then please do not hesitate to contact us through Craig or direct at email addresses below. We would be very pleased to provide temporary access to our Learning Platform if you would like to experience it!

As part of the Adult & Community Learning (ACL) sector Cornwall Adult Education Service (CAES) was included in the first rounds of the NIACE E-Guides programme in a similar fashion to the current roll-out to the WBL sector. Similarly we are also extremely well supported by a specialist from the South West JISC Regional Support Centre (RSC).

The requirements of participation in the E-Guides programme was for the development and implementation of 'cascade action plans' which were seen as a vehicle the 'onward delivery' (cascade) of the ethos and the skills introduced and/or developed during the training, adding value to the programme and building a degree of sustainability into the model. In CAES we created a single cascade action plan for all of our 18 E-Guides and embedded it into our ILT Strategy. Many of the actions were focused on embedding ILT into the very psyche of the organisation, for example through the inclusion of ILT as an agenda item for every, yes every, meeting! It also included commitments to including ILT training to staff development activity, often together with curriculum issues, ILT training for all new tutors and ILT sessions included in formal tutor training award programmes. An Head of ILT/e-Learning post was created at SMT level. E-Guides were drawn from a variety of staff – tutors, Curriculum leaders and managers across most curriculum areas.

The training and 'evangelism' activity developed within the cascade action plan was devised by this very broadly represented E-Guides team and initially consisted of a taster/skills swap type event 'ILT in your teaching' (no prizes for title creativity then!) with tutors typically being able to choose four, half hour sessions from five – Powerpoint, digital cameras, Mimio Xi, Hot Potatoes and Webquests. A two and a half hour session was created around a brief overview introduction, four workshops and a review and feedback to conclude. This was rolled-out by the E-Guides team starting in March 2005 and in causing real frustration (just having half an hour on each topic!) fed into further training sessions, very well attended, focusing on just a single activity. The majority of these events were held on Saturday mornings in Bude, Newquay, Fal-mouth, Liskeard and Helston. The format continues to be delivered to this day and we envisage that this will continue until we have had an 'ILT dialogue' with the vast majority of our teaching (and support) staff. Our motivator has always been that whilst our tutors must always be able to decide on the most effective teaching/training strategy with which to facilitate learning, including whether or not to use ILT – this is only possible with an understanding of ILT's potential. It is amazing how even the most sceptical attendee can find one application of ILT to 'tickle their fancy'!

In the early stages there was no focus on using the CAES Learning Platform (Moodle) although a visit to the externally hosted site was included as a part of the webquest activity.

The ILT training activity has continued for nearly three years, delivered by the E-Guides team and a small group of full time ILT/ICT support staff funded via a European project. For the past two years CAES has included a comprehensive summer ILT staff development programme and an extended offer including using digital sound, podcasting, wikis, blogs, forums chat rooms, Microsoft's Photostory 3, Paperless RARPA, Using Microsoft's Powerpoint and Word interactively and a range of levels to facilitate using Moodle.

We offer one-to-one ILT support on a daily basis and will also support tutors in their classroom by 'just being there in case of problems'.

In the academic year 2006/7 alone the team have engaged with around 175 staff through 250 booked training places with tutors from across the curriculum. We do however have some way to go as in all three years we have engaged with between 50% and 65% of all staff.

As a concurrent ICT (rather than ILT) training and development activity CAES have offered its staff the opportunity to gain an ITQ (NVQ IT User qualification) at level 2 to an in-house profile which includes internet, email, word processing, presentation software and Moodle. This summer saw the first cohort achieve the qualification, completed using the CAES ITQ on-line system – ePortfolios, eAssessment and eVerification.

It is hope that CAES will be able to publish ILT staff development activity and where appropriate invite TPN members to join us.

As mentioned a few times above we are also using a Learning Platform – Moodle and have tried to deploy this as a part of a cohesive ILT strategy rather than 'something special' on its own. In fact we have two Moodles.

CALM (Cornwall Adult Learner's Moodle) is used to support face-to-face sessions and build a sense of learning community for learners who meet for just a few hours once a week. We currently have approaching 60 supported courses right now and are busily rolling it out across CAES. You may have used it if you have been on an Adult Education course recently! We are currently trialing an on-line Personal Learning Record (PLR) that we have developed ourselves. Learner feedback has been fabulous and we are very much encouraged. As with ILT in general we have some way to go in rolling out CALM. It is important to note the all learning spaces are private to the course tutor and their learners and are password protected.

Cornwall Adult Education Service – an ILT Vision in Practice. Cont'd

Just4Staff is more inward facing and gives staff the opportunity to collaborate and feel a sense of community despite sometimes very little contact. The site houses all CAES policies and procedures, in fact all operational documentation and offers a central point for geographically disbursed and sometimes very low contact hours staff to have immediate access to critical information. Each curriculum area has a tutor zone for sharing good practice, there are quality system resources, eSAR systems, geographically-focused tutor hubs for day-to-day information dissemination and

an area for ILT support – a place where all the ILT training materials are available for download. Just4Staff also houses areas for staff to develop their own on-line learning spaces (we call them portals) and when they are ready they are transferred to CALM for use with learners. . In the New Year we are going to target all staff non-users, offering them an account with log-in details and explaining what they're missing by not accessing the site! One of the full-time support team supports Moodle, its administration, the training and support of

tutors and learners (yes learners – we normally prepare them to use their learning portal by visiting their class) and the development of portals as well as other 'things ILT'! We currently have an average of just below 10000 hits on the sites each week and are hosting them ourselves in our Falmouth Centre.

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 Kay Edwards kay.edwards@cornwall-acl.ac.uk

Centre of Excellence for Teacher Training SWitch Development Plan

The SWTPN has worked closely with the Learning South West and a number of partner organisations when they successfully bid to become a Centre of Excellence for Teacher training in the South West. The SWitch project has been running for six months and the network has a position on the project team board as well as attending all the activity progress meetings. Over time it is intended that the fruits of the three year project will prove to be of increasing use to the training providers and their staff. The central focus of the project is:

'to develop an inclusive partnership for excellence which involves the diverse range of organisations involved in Initial Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in the South West learning and skills sector'.

In order to achieve the vision the development plan identifies a number of key aims, a number of which are looked at below.

The first key aim has been to create a model for the improvement of advice and guidance, recruitment, initial assessment, induction, and support of new teachers/trainers by their employers, ITT providers and others. In Year 1 the focus has been on

- a. improving the processes and practices of initial assessment, induction and ongoing support for learners by
 - Establishing the current status of data relating to the Learning and Skills teaching workforce in terms of its diversity, age, gender and disability profile.
 - Establishing the means to survey employers on their practice in advice and guidance,

recruitment, initial assessment, induction, and support (especially in individual Skills for Life needs), and report the findings.

- Commissioning projects from SWitch members which identify, test and evaluate models of practice in this area.
- Sharing good practice arising from those projects and exiting research / models.
- Developing model Individual Learning Plans.
- Creating model Individual Learning plans using existing good practice and available resources from ITT and CPD and distributing them to SWitch members.
- Comparing the results of themed moderation of trainee uses of ILPs across the south west, and report on the results.
- Survey ITT trainees and those engaged in CPD in the region on the impact on their practice of ILPs.

Later priorities will be

- Improving the processes and practice of teacher recruitment
- Developing a workforce progression map
- Working with career support agencies and others to improve teacher recruitment

The second key aim has been to develop strategies across those involved in ITT, which disseminate good practice and facilitate quality improvements in the progress, assessment and re-

including in their specialist teaching area. In order to improve the quality of mentor support programmes we have initiated:

- Researching the models of mentoring, nature and range of mentors working with ITT trainees in the SW. The range of mentors will include research into (1) the coverage of subject areas involved (2) those mentors with expertise in embedding Skills for Life in their subject area (3) those mentors with experience of working with students with disabilities and learning difficulties.
- Establishing an ITT Mentor Support Network
- Commissioning projects from SWitch members which undertake, evaluate and disseminate the results of mentor training in the region.
- Survey trainees in the region on the nature, quality and quantity of mentoring they are receiving.

Later priorities will see

- creating programme modules, learning activities and resources which integrate practical teaching
- creating a range of option and / or specialist modules of training including those for Skills for Life specialists and for raising awareness and training in disability themes.
- locating those integrated training components into model schemes of work

The South West Lifelong Learning IAG and LS Hub

Over the past year the Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network and Nextstep Cornwall have been working increasingly closely together on a number of different projects with a particular focus on the delivery of a quality Information, Advice and Guidance service to those on funded programmes as well as ongoing Learner Support. Nextstep have addressed the sub regional Devon and Cornwall TPN meetings and the Somerset TPN.

The extension of Train to Gain, the Leitch report and its subsequent acceptance by Government and the LSC introducing funding for 1,000 adults for 'Adult Apprenticeships' all add urgency to the need for this hub. Train to Gain has the capacity for the delivery of 2,718 places at NVQ level 3, Leitch commits to the upskilling of vast numbers of the workforce to level 3 and above, primarily through employers

paying for the training, thereby greatly increasing the amount of higher level work being delivered. The Government has also committed to accrediting company training schemes.

This opens up the post 25 year old workforce to training programmes and the opportunities for career development to an unprecedented extent. It is possible that this group are more likely to consider progression to higher level programmes than the under 25's. Consequently the focus of their IAG and Learner Support will be significantly different from that provided to the younger cohort.

Although an increasing number of training providers have now achieved or are currently undertaking Matrix accreditation it is becoming apparent that in order to further raise quality the training providers need to be directed

towards a post matrix staff development programme. The hub would be at the centre of this. Nextstep will be the key movers in the relationship in identifying the training requirements, developing a programme to meet them and then delivering it.

Currently the envisioned post Matrix development is seen as being set out in a two day training course that will include:

- Introduction to Certificate and ENTO Advice and Guidance Standards,
- Adviser Techniques
- Communication Skills
- Stages of an Interview
- Information Resources,
- Networking and Referral
- Action Planning
- Adviser's Action Plan audit check list

Commissioning Services for Children and Young People

The Plymouth's Children's Trust held an important conference on November 20th to outline the current position concerning collaboration and integrated commissioning. The primary purpose of the Children's Trust is to secure integrated commissioning, a strategic activity driving continuous improvement and innovation, involving assessment of need, identification of priorities and outcomes and allocation of resources to meet the identified needs of children and young people. With the focus switching increasingly towards a single body covering all 14-19 delivery it was good to see that the conference was attended by a number of local private training providers.

The government has given

guidance putting an increasing emphasis on the role of the Local Authorities and Children's Trusts as Strategic Commissioners. The guidance states that the transition to joint planning and commissioning will be a challenging and complex cultural change programme. Because of the age group providers deal with clearly the Children's Trust's work will impact upon us.

Already providers have had to increase their attention to the five key outcomes demanded under Every Child Matters. Consequently it will come as no surprise for them to see the similarities between those outcomes and the seven core aims of the Children's Trusts for all children and young people. A flying start for growth and development; Equality of access to

Learning, Education and Training to acquire personal and social skills; to Enjoy physical, mental, social and emotional health; Access to play, leisure sporting and cultural activities; to be listened to and treated with respect; to have a safe home that supports physical and emotional well-being, and lastly not to be disadvantaged by poverty or any other factor.

With the proposed increase in the school/training leaving age it is apparent that the Local Authorities and Children's Trust will play an increasingly significant role in the business of some training providers. It is re-assuring that a positive start to that process has been made and providers look forward to future collaboration.

Capacity and Capability Building to address Leadership and Management Skills Solutions

In the south west the LSC are currently offering all SMEs with between 5-249 employees, a leadership and management development (LMD) match funded subsidy of up to £1,000 via Train to Gain. Providers are invited to participate in capacity and capability workshops designed to deepen the understanding of how to meet employer needs for leadership and management development; linking to Train to Gain and potentially enabling more investment by employers in developing their workforce. If your organisation wishes to participate and has not responded to the invitation sent out in December you need to contact your partnership manager before January 10th

Devon & Cornwall TPN Ltd Annual General Meeting

The Devon & Cornwall TPN's second Annual General Meeting will be held at Thursday 24th January from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 a.m. to be held at Teignbridge Business Centre, Heathfield, Devon. The meeting is open to all paid up members of the network and the agenda will cover the Chairman's welcome, Managing Director's Report, the Financial Director's Report's and an up to date progress related to the Business Plan. New nominations are invited for the board of directors before January 10th (to be sent to Craig Marshall) and Confirmation of Board will be agreed. For further information do not hesitate to contact Craig directly. In order to plan seating and refreshments if those intending to attend could inform Kerry Merrin by Thursday 19th January. (kerry@trainingprovider.com)

The Challenge of Success Rates

For the first time in 2006/07 was done. Devon and Cornwall's full framework success rates have dropped behind the national average, as has the regional figure. Our rates have improved year on year but this year the faster rate of improvement in the overall national figures meant that they have overtaken us, currently the gap is only 0.3%, but worrying nevertheless and given the fact that national rates are improving at a faster rate unless we improve our game it could well be greater next year. Interestingly in the South West Devon and Cornwall is only above the West of England in terms of success rates, Gloucestershire achieved 64%, Dorset 64% and Somerset 63%. In one sub region elsewhere in the country full framework success rates increased last year by 24% going up to a figure of 74% without a reduction in the number of starts, so careful cherry picking of only good candidates wasn't the way it

So is this really important to us? Devon and Cornwall has performed better than most of the region in terms of Train to Gain starts, do the figures show that providers have concentrated rather more on that market rather than on the more traditional apprenticeships? As yet we don't have sufficient outcomes to be able to develop an accurate picture, but if it is the case one can argue for efforts to redress the focus. We are well practised at suggesting that the rural nature of our area makes it harder to deliver than in concentrated urban areas, but that case doesn't hold water when we recall that both Somerset and Dorset with similar rural issues are out performing us and that Bristol is the only area doing worse. Indeed on the last full figures we had by post code our rural success rates were 5% above our urban ones. So what should be done? Providers do need to establish links with provid-

ers in other areas to share good practice. The QIA's Peer Referencing scheme is a good vehicle for this, and the LSC's own initiative on referencing starts in Taunton on January 17th.

As a network Jacqui Locock is spending time in other regions trying to identify factors which are helping improve their performance. As providers increasingly make use of blended delivery included utilising e based support quality will improve, it is hoped that our LIG VLE bid will be successful and provide another tier of support, we should hear in the next two weeks. Above all providers have to realise the problem and focus on meeting it. Failure to deliver our contracts in full will mean the loss of future funds for the area as money gets re directed elsewhere, we need to improve our performance to secure the maximum funding for our core business.

St Loye's Foundation

St. Loye's Foundation, Exeter, has been providing residential, in-house training and personal development to people with disabilities for 70 years. Despite the evident need for this, we at St Loye's have been re-considering our offering, however. Why? The nature and understanding of disability is changing, with many of our current clients facing barriers linked as much to psychological issues as to physical ones. Moreover, in common with most people, our clients want increasing choice and to take control of their personal and career development. Many no longer wish to undertake residential training. Finally, non-discrimination legislation allows many more of our traditional clients to access mainstream education. Therefore, with the support of our principal financial backers, the Department of Works and Pensions, we are now looking to provide a more client-centred, flexible model of personal development and training. Whilst continuing to offer in-house, residential courses, we are now able to respond to client requirements by buying in a wide variety of training and personal development programmes, and personal support services.

At present, 75% of our clients come from the South West and we anticipate buying in provision for 100 or more clients during the 2008-9 financial year. The nature of the programmes bought in will vary enormously, but our total external spend is expected to reach £0.7m in the year. Do please make contact with us if you require further information – the next TPN Network meeting is being held at St. Loye's, Exeter, on the 11th January.

Christopher Knee Chief Executive St Loye's Foundation contact via cknee@stloyes.ac.uk

AdvAnce ↑ update

It might not be widely known, but some apprenticeship schemes are harder to get onto than courses at Oxbridge. Suitable applicants to study engineering science at Oxford, for example, have a one in three chance of getting in. Engineering apprenticeships with British Gas are in such high demand that suitable applicants have only about a one in 15 chance of being accepted. BBC news

This exciting LSC funded partnership project between DCTPN, LSC and Almhiger is starting to produce some interesting results.

AdvAnce has been set up to

1. Determine the extent and nature of work based learner progression to HE.
2. Survey current Foundation degree students to determine progression history of previous work based learners
3. Provide evidence to inform future decision making and practice in relation to work based learners progressing into HE
4. Raise awareness of HE progression opportunities for work based learners and to raise aspirations

The pilot phase has been successfully completed with North Devon, Achievement training and Paignton Secretarial all providing AdvAnce with qualitative data about the progression plans for their graduating AAs. . The pilot results have revealed that –

- **Advance Apprenticeship are ambitious**

Six months after completing their framework
34 % expected to either have been promoted or be in a new job
3 years after completing their framework 43%
expected to either have been promoted or be in a new job

- **A significant minority of AAs want to carry on learning almost immediately after Advanced Apprenticeship has been completed**

Six months after completing their framework
27% expected to undertake a higher qualification
3 years after completing their framework 33%
expected to undertake a higher qualification

An additional regional training provider conducted a paper based survey of their graduating AAs and results showed that **a staggering 58% wanted to progress onto higher learning at some point in the future.**

- **82% of AAs questioned expected to be working full time which means any higher learning provision has to allow for graduates to continue to work full time**
- **60% of learners do not know what higher qualifications they might need in the future. This indicates a clear need for sustained and progressive Information Advice and Guidance to Advanced Apprentices throughout their AA framework.**

And what about AA in HE.....?The AdvAnce online survey of all UPC students which ran from October 07 – December 07 has revealed that 11.8% of new FD students have done an apprenticeship of some kind.

So what next?

All training providers in Devon and Cornwall who will have a minimum of 10 AA's will be contacted over the next 12 months by the AdvAnce team and will be asked to collect and collate the same progression data from their graduating AAs. One participating training provider has already expressed the benefits of their involvement in AdvAnce stating that not only will Ofsted like this intervention but also "it benefits the AA because it helps them focus on where they are going next." There will be a financial allocation to offset any staff time and an annual report produced summarising all the findings which will be overseen by John Chudley and disseminated across the region. For more information please contact

Kate Poole on 01209 617753 or kate.poole@cornwall.ac.uk or come and talk to her at the next DCTPN meeting in January

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