

Basic skills support for Lincolnshire and Rutland. A Local Interventions and Development (LID) funded project.

An evaluation commissioned by the Manager of the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership

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NB The version of this report presented on CD also contains a full set of (i) Project Proposals, (ii) Interim Monitoring Visit Reports and (iii) Project Evaluation Reports.

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Section One – The Original Project Brief (Contract with LSC)

LID Project –Schedule 1/Service Specific

Basic Skills Support
Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership

Description and purpose of service to be delivered

Aim

To ensure that all 11 local learning partnerships engage in initiatives that seek to increase basic skills activity in their local area.

Objectives

- Develop innovative approaches to encourage the uptake of basic skills learning and support leading to national literacy/numeracy qualifications
- To provide local pathways into basic skills learning and support
- To implement elements of activity identified within each of the local partnership skills for life action plans
- To work with local providers to ensure that basic skills provision takes into account the needs of individuals within the local areas.
- To co-ordinate the activities of the local partnership groups and to ensure that local data on take up of courses and achievement of literacy/numeracy/ESOL qualifications is monitored through the 11 local partnership groups
- To pursue the recommendations of the evaluation of previous Learning Partnership LID funded activity relating to Basic Skills.

Outcomes/outputs

- Activity outline from each local partnership detailing how funding allocation will be spent – end of October 2004.
- Bi-Monthly reports, (or as such time as coincides with Skills for Life sub-group meeting) detailing:
 - Levels of basic skills activity in each local area (take-up and achievement)
 - Progress against local activity plan
- Meeting to be held with Partnership Manager, support worker and LLSC basic skills co-ordinator on a bi-monthly basis.
- Attendance of a representative from each local partnership group at the bimonthly Skills for Life subgroup meeting
- Dissemination /evaluation event during April 2005.

Section Two – Introduction, Main Findings and Recommendations

The interpretation of the aim, objectives and outcomes

It was decided that the LID funding allocated to project support be used to contract in the services of a project facilitator. Chris Donkin was appointed to this role and his input began on the 1st September 2004. Chris Donkin is also the author of this report.

Chris Donkin and the Learning Partnership Manager (Ann Canham) revisited the original project descriptor (shown overleaf) and agreed that emphasis of the original brief was to be on learner participation of hard-to-reach client groups through action research projects. The following interpretation of the aim of the initiative was shared with the Lincolnshire and Rutland Basic Skills Support Group in September 2004.

Adopting this approach, it was predicted that all the specific objectives and outcomes/outputs of the contract could be met.

Main Findings

- The project has been very successful in terms of raising participation.
- The project very successful in terms of capacity building.
- The project has made a significant contribution to raising the profile of basic skills locally.
- The project has been successful in engaging hard-to-reach learners.
- The project has fostered and developed effective partnership working.

Recommendations

The following actions are recommended:

- It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership ESF funding for basic skills signposting is used to support a creative approach to exploring community based Skills for Life provision.
- It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership play a lead role in ensuring a co-ordinated approach to literacy, language and numeracy provision in the two counties.
- It is recommended that the Learning Partnership continue to actively support the development of the CPD network.
- It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership continue to build on the productive collaborative arrangements that have been established during the implementation of this project. Specifically, post-16 providers should be encouraged to continue to work together to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and courses.

Section Three – Establishing project activity in each local learning partnership area

Each partnership group was allocated approximately £5500 to make a contribution to this project and the complementary ESF project (see Appendix I). All project activity relating to the LID funded work was to be completed by the 31st March 2005. During September 2004, where possible, the key basic skills contact within each partnership group worked with the project facilitator to establish a project proposal or proposals. Due to some local pragmatic difficulties some partnerships established their project proposals in October or November. As a consequence, 16 projects were established. A summary of the proposals is shown below:

Boston – Project One – The Discovery Arcade Game

PROPOSAL

The arcade game Discovery has been developed by the University of Abertay. The game is considered to be unique in that game claims to give users the opportunity to develop their literacy and numeracy skills by simply playing the game.

This project seeks to make the software available in pubs and centres for vulnerable young men in the Boston area. In Boston, as elsewhere, young adult males are considered difficult to reach learners.

Discovery has an embedded basic skills programme embedded within the content of the game. This project seeks to identify whether or not the game will engage the target client group and whether or not they enjoyed the experience once engaged. In the longer term the intention is (a) to signpost the participants to further basic skills training, (b) explore ways of using Discovery within a more formal basic skills programme and (c) explore other opportunities to use similar games/software within basic skills learning programmes.

AGREED TARGETS

The proposed activity is that the participants play the game for one hour and then after completing a short evaluation, they are then given a 'free pint' (or drink to the value of £2) in the pub environment or a voucher (to the value of £3) in the Centre Point / Rainer / Shaw Trust environment.

It is intended that within the pub environment 100 participants will engage and that within the 'vulnerable youth' environment 60 participants will engage. (NB This initial ambitious target was revised downwards to a total of 60 participants at the 'interim monitoring' stage of the project)

Boston – Project Two – The CAB Financial Literacy Project

PROPOSAL

Provide a focussed, non-accredited course of study that provides support for DTTO, Addaction and SureStart clients who struggle with the management of personal finances. It is intended to signpost the learners to further opportunities to develop numeracy skills and to acquire nationally recognised qualifications.

DTTO, Addaction and SureStart clients are under-represented groups. This project seeks to increase participation rates.

AGREED TARGETS

It is intended that 24 learners (8 from each of DTTO, Addaction and SureStart) will engage with this project. The timescale legislates against these learners being fully prepared to attempt to achieve a nationally recognised numeracy qualification before 31.3.05. However, it is hoped that several access that progression route after the end of March.

Coastal – Project One – Supporting the Stepladder Project

PROPOSAL

Building on the success of Stepladder 1, the Stepladder project seeks to expand the advice and information service offered to potential learners in the Mablethorpe area.

Last session, 03-04, the Stepladder project signposted approximately 80 adults into learning opportunities. This session the project hopes to make use of an IT resourced facility in the newly acquired Stepladder 2 premises to offer a wider range of initial engagement opportunities. Although Stepladder 2 will be used by collaborative partners (e.g. Boston College, CG Partnership) to ensure that the facility is also able to offer IAG opportunities, this will require additional staffing.

AGREED TARGETS

There is another source of ESF funding directed towards the Stepladder Initiative. This complementary project seeks to engage with 264 beneficiaries over two years - i.e. 132 per year. These 132 beneficiaries are attributable to Stepladder 1 as the bid/contract only specifies Stepladder 1. This project jointly funded by the ESF pot and the LID pot would seek to offer additional initial engagement opportunities to a further 100 potential adult learners. Attributable to the LID funding is a sub-target of 20 learners to engage by the 31st March 2005.

Coastal – Project Two – Basic Skills for Adults at Mablethorpe Primary

PROPOSAL

To support literacy/numeracy classes based in Mablethorpe Primary School by assisting in the funding of a crèche facility. These classes would not attract a 'critical mass' if a crèche facility were not provided. This proposed activity seeks to offer daytime literacy/numeracy opportunities for adult learners.

AGREED TARGETS

The project proposes attracting 14 learners to the classes. The classes will run for 10 weeks from January to March. It is envisaged that 10 learners will acquire a nationally recognised qualification.

Gainsborough – Project One – Gainsborough Adult Education Service supporting hard-to-reach learners

PROPOSAL

Three separate projects as described overleaf:

Proposal for support for Gainsborough SureStart clients

To design and deliver a series of sessions (up to 30 sessions [x 2 hours] for direct delivery to parents). The sessions would be non-vocational but would form a programme of achievement for which a certificate of attendance can be issued. Design of the programme would be in close consultation with Sure Start Community Development Workers, Homestart and Health Visitors. Learners will be able to cherry pick sessions but will be encouraged to attend regularly to increase motivation and improve long-term aspirations.

Initial subjects to be covered would include Basic First Aid Skills, Parenting and Childcare Skills, Assertiveness, Healthy Eating, Stress Management, Money Management and Health and Beauty. In the longer term, parents would be encouraged to consider Basic Skills courses and other Adult and Further Education courses.

Proposal For Gainsborough Travellers £1000

To deliver 10 sessions (x 2 hours) of embedded IT and Basic Skills. This will continue similar work started in Autumn 2004. Two tutors (1 IT, 1 Basic Skills) will develop work already established to encourage the traveller community to engage in Basic Skills courses and work towards a qualification.

In addition, a further 6 sessions (x 2 hours) of general interest courses will be delivered to enhance the Basic Skills provision. This will include hairdressing, nail art and similar.

Proposal for Gainsborough Trinity House £1000

To design and deliver a series of sessions (x2 hours), for direct delivery, to service users of Trinity House. Trinity House is the location of the Mental Health Rehabilitation Team. The sessions would be non-vocational but would form a programme of achievement for which a certificate of attendance can be issued. Design of the programme would be in close consultation with the team at Trinity House and a DIY tutor.

Initial subjects covered could be: different types of light bulbs, looking at security, painting a wall, including preparation, putting up a shelf, changing the fuse on a plug, unblocking a sink, damp and mould, using power tools, filling and sanding holes, different fixings for different walls, what to do in an emergency (water, gas, electricity) preparing surfaces for painting, eg wood, melamine, tiles.

AGREED TARGETS

Re-engage current non-learners in a range of learning opportunities, raise awareness and motivation. It is hoped that 10 learners under each project will return to learning. Hence the overall target for engagement is 30.

Gainsborough – Project Two – GCSE Maths at Market Rasen

PROPOSAL

CG Partnership propose running a GCSE Maths course with a February start as a progression opportunity for existing “SKILL” learners and as a “carrot” for January basic skills intensive learners

The initiative will also evaluate the degree to which take-up is based on (a) new learners (b) progression for existing/past learners and/or (c) acts as a “carrot” for new intensive basic skills learners

AGREED TARGETS

CG Partnership intend to attract 10 learners to the GCSE course. They wish to test the origin of these 10 learners according to the parameters listed above. They hope that the presence of the course will help attract 10 new learners onto other basic skills maths courses in January (offered through the SKILL programme).

Grantham – Project One – The Harrowby Paid Initiative

PROPOSAL

To offer a paid incentive to learners in the Harrowby area to attract hard to reach learners. This project would be based on a successful project already run in the Earlesfield ward.

Currently, there are no classes running in this community, but yes4learning have built a strong relationship with SureStart and have attracted a group of learners onto IT courses. From this they hope to be able to attract learners onto basic skills courses.

AGREED TARGETS

Ten learners enrolling onto literacy or numeracy courses with an expectation that the learners register for national tests.

Grantham – Project Two – Robot Wars

PROPOSAL

Grantham College to work in partnership with St Hugh's Mathematics and Computing College to encourage parent participation in numeracy classes using 'Robot Wars' as a theme. Grantham College (as yes4learning) have been working with St Hugh's specialist college to run community classes for 2 years but have been unable to attract learners to numeracy classes.

Currently there are no community numeracy classes running in the Earlesfield ward where St Hugh's school is sited

AGREED TARGETS

Five learners enrolling onto this 'embedded' numeracy class, with the intention of taking national qualifications at an appropriate level.

Grantham – Project Three – Dissemination of Good Practice

PROPOSAL

Review of work done in Grantham over 3 years which has resulted in a National Training Award and a Beacon Award and dissemination of this information to providers throughout the County.

From this review we would hope to be able to assess what has worked well and develop a model which other providers may wish to consider. Review of practice in the area will shape the growth of Basic Skills over the next 3 years.

AGREED TARGETS

As this project is a "dissemination" project, there are no formal targets for engagement.

Horncastle – Parents of young children progressing

PROPOSAL

The ESF funded Newground project last year sought to re-engage paused learners with education service. As part of the work, learners were given 'read-write-plus' packs. Many now want to develop their basic skills. This project seeks to support that process. Additionally this project seeks to offer literacy/numeracy opportunities for parents who were not engaged in the Newground project.

Many learners have re-engaged informally with the education service but have not thus far accessed formal basic skills training.

AGREED TARGETS

The target for engagement is 24. It is proposed that 3 classes of 8 learners in each group will be accommodated. It is expected that 16 of these individuals will achieve a nationally recognised qualification, although this is unlikely to happen before 31/3/05.

Lincoln – Basic Skills through ICT

PROPOSAL

The Birchwood Community and Access Centre propose to progress basic skills students, who lack confidence in using the opportunities afforded by ICT onto learndirect basic skills courses and to other basic skills programmes resourced by IT.

Many people do not trust the ICT world that is rapidly growing around them and feel left behind. A good percentage of them are in need of basic skills tuition and are more comfortable with learning in semi-traditional ways. Introducing them to using IT resourced provision within the familiar atmosphere of the Centre can break down their perceived barriers to its uses.

AGREED TARGETS

The Birchwood Community and Access Centre aim for 20 people to benefit for this project with 6 to benefit by gaining an achievement qualification. The remainder should benefit from the experience from their participation in ICT use.

Louth – A 'One Stop Shop' for Basic Skills Support

PROPOSAL

This project is co-funded with monies from the Lincolnshire and Rutland ESF Basic Skills Support Project, the Action Element Fund and the CPD Network ESF fund. This 'joined-up' project proposes to :

Appoint a Louth Skills for Life Guidance officer to:

- § Develop the CPD network
- § Act as a sign poster to local basic skills provision
- § Offer support and advice to all persons requiring it regardless of their circumstances and eligibility

The levels of literacy/numeracy skills within the Louth area are relatively low, this project seeks to:

- § Raise the profile of basic skills within the Louth area and establish pathways into learning
- § Further develop network of CPD deliverer in Louth and further develop the use of resources

AGREED TARGETS

The overall project targets are 180 beneficiaries signposted with 80 progressing to a 'positive outcome' (as defined by the ESF contract). The sub-target for activity funded by the LID monies is adult basic skills learners 27 engaged by the 31st March 2005.

Rutland – Dispersed Learning

PROPOSAL

To engage dispersed learners in basic skills activities.

Delivery of short numeracy and literacy 9 hour courses on a one-to-one basis using a flexible approach to delivery times and points. Integrating new learners into an existing course once term has started is sometimes problematic. This intensive introduction would better equip late starting learners to join a group with confidence.

This project seeks to improve retention rates in rurally based learners who maybe unable to access courses for various reasons.

AGREED TARGETS

Ten participants from within partnership area (Rutland and Lincolnshire postcodes). All will undergo diagnostic assessment and 6 will progress to a national qualification aim.

Sleaford – Establishing a CPD Centre at Sleaford

PROPOSAL

To develop local pathways for adult learners to take advantage of local education and training opportunities by first developing their basic skills

To encourage the uptake of basic skills learning and support by

- a. Providing local pathways (e.g. embedded basic skills ⇒ literacy/numeracy classes ⇒ formal vocational training)
- b. Assessing employee needs through consultation with local employers and running taster sessions at work.

AGREED TARGETS

- a. Engage 8 learners by giving them an initial introduction to programme of learning opportunities as described in section 3. This is likely to take the form of basic skills opportunities embedded within a leisure learning session
- b. Engage 12 new learners from the workforce. These 12 have the opportunity to experience a basic skills taster session.

Spalding – The use of ELLIS software to teach ESOL

PROPOSAL

Develop staff to design and deliver a taught ESOL course where the learners are expected to access the ELLIS software as part of the programme. The course format will be six taught classes and six IT resourced sessions. The taught classes will be delivered by the University of Lincoln. Access to the ELLIS material will most likely take place at Holbeach. However, as the ELLIS software will be installed on a number of laptops it gives the flexibility to deliver this aspect of the course in the workplace, home environment or other learning venues.

AGREED TARGETS

Teach ESOL to 12 learners organised into 2 groups of 6. It is anticipated that 8 of these learners will achieve nationally recognised qualifications.

Additionally it is intended that a greater knowledge (within the Skills for Life network) of use of IT resources to deliver ESOL courses will promote greater participation in the future.

Stamford – Garden Design Embedded Basic Skills

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to pilot an alternative embedded course to evaluate if the theme of the course, “garden design” impacts positively on recruitment in engaging men into basic skills

AGREED TARGETS

Target of 10 enrolments - 8 minimum course completers. Ideally the cohort should be 50% men - Stamford Focus current male engagement 26%

Section Four – Each project – performance against target

As can be seen from the previous section, all local learning partnerships took an active part in this initiative. The table below illustrates that there was a rich variety of project activity. Most partnership groups sought to use the funding to directly increase participation rates. All partnerships targeted their project activity at hard-to-reach learners.

Table One – A summary of local project activity

No	Partnership	Project	Target	31/O3	Exp	31/O3	Exp
			Enr	Enr	Enr	Ach	Ach
1	BOSTON	Discovery Arcade Game	60	19	34	0	0
2	BOSTON	CAB Financial Literacy Project	24	15	39	0	0
3	COASTAL	Supporting activity in 'Stepladder 2'	20	24	24	0	16
4	COASTAL	Creche support for Ad BS at M'thrp Prim	14	14	14	4	10
5	GAINSBORO	Travellers basic skills group	10	8	10	0	1
5	GAINSBORO	Surestart basic skills group	10	9	10	0	6
5	GAINSBORO	Trinity House (Mental Health)	10	6	12	0	0
6	GAINSBORO	GCSE Maths at Market Rasen	10	9	11	0	5
7	GRANTHAM	Harrowby Paid Initiative	10	10	10	0	8
8	GRANTHAM	Robot Wars	5	0	0	0	0
9	GRANTHAM	Dissemination of 'Good Practice' from 'yes'	0	0	0	0	0
10	HORNCASTLE	Parents of young children progressing	24	24	24	0	16
11	LINCOLN	Basic Skills through using ICT	20	53	53	45	53
12	LOUTH	CPD Centre as 1 stop shop for basic skills	27	0	27	0	20
13	RUTLAND	Dispersed basic skills learning	10	8	10	0	6
14	SLEAFORD	New pathways and employer links	20	19	31	0	0
15	SPALDING	Using ELLIS to teach ESOL	12	24	24	8	16
16	STAMFORD	Basic Skills embedded in Gardening course	10	0	10	0	8
			296	242	343	57	165

In the above table “Enr” refers to a number of enrolments and “Ach” refers to the number of achievements that count towards the national goal for basic skills successes. The targets shown in the above table are those described within the project proposals and quoted in the previous section of this report. The 31/03 columns refer to quantifiable outcomes as measured on the 31st March 2004.

The emphasis of this project was on action research and there was no requirement to set participation targets. Despite this, the partnerships combined to establish a learner engagement target of 296. Unlike the LID funded work last year, the project has been somewhat complicated by the mixing-and-matching with ESF funding (see Appendix I). As a result of many of the projects being joined-up with ESF signposting work (ESF projects not scheduled to finish until the end of September), some of the LID funded work fell behind schedule. As can be seen the actual number of learners engaging with this project as of the 31st March was 242. However, the columns headed “Exp” indicate the number of learners expected to engage before the 31st September. If this figure of 343 is realised this will represent a remarkable achievement by the partnerships. Indeed, if the total declared on the 31st March was not added to, this would still represent a significant success in terms of widening

participation given that all learners are from under-represented groups. The columns headed “ach” represent achievements of nationally recognised basic skills qualifications by the learners. This figure currently stands at 57 and is expected to increase in the summer months, as some of the learners engaged by this initiative present themselves for the national tests. The final figure for achievements is predicted to be 165. Chris Donkin has acted as the ‘Basic Skills Project Facilitator’ for this project. He will continue to work with the partnerships to support the ESF funded work. He will continue to report ‘post deadline’ LID funded activity to the Learning Partnership Basic Skills Sub-Committee. In short subsequent reports will be presented to indicated whether or not the ‘expected’ figures were achieved.

A summary of how each project performed against target is described in the pages that follow. The text where appropriate, has been lifted from the project evaluation forms completed by the key contact from the relevant local partnership.

Boston – Project One – The Discovery Arcade Game

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Targets - 100 participants in Pub environment, 60 within Vulnerable youth environment .

Revised to target of 60 at the ‘Interim Monitoring Stage’

Actual – 3 from vulnerable youth area (Key Stage 4 – Boston College), also 16 from a Basic Skills Class from a Community Learning Centre environment.

Boston – Project Two – The CAB Financial Literacy Project

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Initially the target was engage 24 learners - 8 learners from each 3 very hard-to-reach groups (i.e. DTTO, Addaction and SureStart). By the end of March, 15 learners had engaged: 10 DTTO clients, 3 Addaction service users and 2 from Surestart.

Coastal- Project One – Supporting the Stepladder Project

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Stepladder 2 is funded by a combination of ESF and LID funding. The 9 month target for ESF activity is 100 beneficiaries signposted and 60 learners engaged. Stepladder 2 activity has been concentrated into 3 months. Hence the (one third) target for engagement is 20 learners.

As of 31/3/05, 16 learners were directly engaged with basic skill activity administered by Jenny Kitching of Stepladder 2. The Stepladder Information and Advice Officer (Cheryl Pawson) has carried out 24 initial engagements in the last 3 months. This is a time-consuming activity and is only possible due to the extra staffing. The additional contribution from Jenny Kitching of Stepladder 2 has effectively ‘freed up’ some of Cheryl’s time. Hence it is claimed that approximately one half (i.e. 12) of the learners engaged through initial engagement and then progression activity have been as a result of Stepladder 2 funding.

Hence it is claimed that 28 learners (16 directly + 12 due to the advances in the Stepladder infrastructure) have engaged with basic skills activity as a result of Stepladder 2 funding.

Coastal- Project Two – Basic Skills for Adults in Mablethorpe Primary School

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Exactly 14 learners enrolled as per target. Four learners have attempted the national test for literacy and numeracy at an appropriate level, three have passed. The remaining 10 learners will be offered the opportunity to sit the test after the 31/3/05.

Gainsborough – Project One – Gainsborough Adult Education Service supporting hard-to-reach learners

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

In total 23 learners accessed this provision – the original target was 30.

Six learners enrolled for the basic numeracy embedded within a DIY course for Trinity House (Mental Health) clients. Eight learners have enrolled for Basic Skills / IT at Gainsborough Traveller site. Nine learners from SureStart have attended a 'Money Management' course – as a consequence one learner taking level 2 Basic skills qualification

Further sessions (fun tasters in Aromatherapy, Glass painting, makeup) organised at Gainsborough traveller site and Gainsborough Nursery

Gainsborough – Project Two – GCSE Maths at Market Rasen

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Nine learners enrolled. The target engagement was 10.

Some latecomers expected after Easter. CG Partnership will continue to allow learners to enrol until mid April.

Grantham – Project One – Harrowby Paid Initiative

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Ten learners enrolled as per target. All learners registered to sit the national tests in literacy and/or numeracy after 31st March 2005.

Grantham – Project Two – Robot Wars

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

This project was abandoned shortly after the 'Interim Monitoring' visit. A key member of the Grantham College Skills for Life team left. Reduced capacity at the College meant that effective liaison with the secondary school in the prescribed timeframe was not possible. The allocated funding was unclaimed and re-allocated to the Abbey Access Centre at Lincoln who used the funding to support the Boston Partnership Arcade Game project.

Grantham – Project Three – Dissemination of Good Practice at yes4learning

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

No formal targets for engagement. However, aims of the project have been realised.

Horncastle – Parents of Young Children Progressing

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

The monitoring visit was carried out relatively late. At that stage (4/3/05), Barbara Clarke the Chair of the Horncastle Learning Partnership reported that there were 20 learners on programme and that she was confident that the target of 24 would be met. Barbara has had to take some time off work. However, Vice Chair of the Horncastle Learning Partnership Mick Gill declares that it is a relatively safe assumption that at least 24 parents of young children are now (as of the 31/3/05) on the programme.

Lincoln – Basic Skills through using ICT

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

The original target was 20 learners, with 6 expected to gain a nationally recognised qualification. As of the 31/03/05, 45 learners had passed the National Test in literacy and/or numeracy after being supported on a programme where basic skills was taught using IT. A further 8 learners are on the programme and are due to sit the National Test after 31/03/05.

Louth – CPD Centre as ‘One Stop Shop’ for Basic Skills Support

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

The global targets are framed around the ESF funded activity. There is a sub-target for this project of 27 learners enrolled on *Skills for Life* courses by the end of March. Due to the time slippage, this has proved to be not achievable. However, beyond 31/03/05 the project still expects to engage the originally targeted 80 learners during the 36 weeks of ESF/LID funded project lifespan.

Rutland – Dispersed Basic Skills Learning

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Eight learners enrolled for the ‘Dispersed Learning course. The original target was for ten learners. However recruitment activities are still being pursued and Janet Pink (Key contact for the project) is optimistic that the target of 10 enrolled will be reached sometime in May. She is also confident that the target for 6 national qualifications can be achieved. However it is now established that the learners will acquire the qualifications after the end of March 05

Sleaford – New Pathways and Employer Links

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Basic skills has been embedded into 2 classes (i) sewing skills and (ii) music. Both classes have enrolled and the learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The music class has 10 learners. The sewing skills has enrolled 9 learners. Obviously the target of 8 learners has been exceeded. However, the workforce development aspect of the project has not yet enrolled learners for the planned taster sessions.

Spalding – Using ELLIS software to teach ESOL

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

Initial target for engagement was 12. In total 24 learners enrolled on the course. All 24 learners (on 2 courses) were taught ESOL using ELLIS as part of the learning programme.

Stamford – Basic skills embedded in leisure learning courses for Homestart clients

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

No learners responded to advert placed in the Stamford Mercury. The advert was repeated for a second week but still no takers. Hence, no learners engaged.

Section Five – Overarching Themes

A notable feature of the project is the way that in some areas the project has linked up with other basic skills initiatives managed by the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership. In Boston, Mablethorpe, Grantham, Louth and Spalding the LID funded activity was supported by a complementary ‘advice and information’ service funded by the Learning Partnership ‘Supporting Basic Skills’ ESF projects. In Louth the activity is also tied to the Action Element funding and to some additional funding provided by the Lincolnshire and Rutland Skills for Life Continuing Professional Development project.

The initiative has enlisted the support of the Adult Education service in many areas. The Community Education Development Officers (CEDOs) for Stamford, Gainsborough, Sleaford and Coastal have been nominated as ‘key contacts’ for project work in their areas.

The contribution to the local *Skills for Life* agenda is considerable. It has been established that this project is likely to have contributed to over 300 hard-to-reach learners engaging with basic skills provision in the Lincolnshire and Rutland.

Although the work of the LID funded project was diverse, there were three major over-arching themes: (i) the positive impact of effective initial engagement; (ii) the use of community venues makes learning a much more attractive proposition and (iii) the use of IT to deliver basic skills programmes has been well received by the learners. It is now proposed to consider some of the issues relating to these aspects of project activity in turn.

The positive impact of effective initial engagement

This project has shown the benefits of individuals receiving high quality information and advice relating to education and training opportunities in a local easily-accessible setting. With the complementary ESF funded signposting activity running in parallel there have been many examples of a joined-up approach reaping benefits for the prospective learner.

In Mablethorpe many of the learners who have engaged with the LID funded activity have been as a direct result of advice being available at Stepladder. With several providers operating in the area, Stepladder has acted as an ‘honest broker’ and has referred several individuals to basic skills provision available from the Adult Education Service, Boston College and CG Partnership and Boston College.

Although the partly LID funded ‘one stop shop’ in Louth is still emerging, it is already clear that a locally based impartial information and advice service is likely to have a positive impact on participation rates in the area.

In Boston, the Citizens Advice Bureau has provided access to training for three very hard-to-reach client groups. Addaction, DTTO and Surestart clients have all been signposted to LID funded basic skills taster opportunities as a result of the LID funding made available to the Boston Partnership.

In the Spalding area the success of the LID funded ELLIS work has been attributable to signposting opportunities available as a result of the complementary ESF funded information and advice partnership project.

The use of community venues

During the lifetime of the project it has become increasingly clear that the use of community based provision is a major factor in attracting hard-to-reach learners.

In Gainsborough on-site provision has been crucial in attracting the Travellers to basic skills classes. The mental health group and Surestart clients have also benefited from the local Adult Education Service taking their classes to the learners.

One of the most successful projects in terms of participation has been the ‘basic skills using IT’ course accommodated at Birchwood Community Access Centre. The feedback from the evaluation report indicated : *“The use of the IT facility at a community venue allows Birchwood to offer something ‘a bit different’ in terms of Skills for Life support. Some of the learners have found the environment more appealing than the FE College environment”*. The implication is that the learners who engaged would not necessarily accessed similar courses at more established venue.

In addition to the above LID funded learners in Boston, Market Rasen, Harrowby in Grantham, Seaford and Rutland have all benefited from the use of non-traditional locations being used to deliver basic skills classes.

Using IT to deliver basic skills programmes

An observation that has been noted within the documentation of several of the projects is that the use of IT has made the offer of basic skills courses more attractive.

The LID funded ‘Financial Literacy’ project operating in Boston was well received by the learners partly due to the use of IT to deliver the course. In the interim monitoring report the following comment was made by the key contact for the project : *“The clients have really appreciated use of high quality IT resources and have been impressed by the effort and thought that has gone into putting on such a course for them.”*

The use of ELLIS software to deliver ESOL is another example of effective use of IT to engage hard-to-reach learners in basic skills provision. The evaluation report for this project noted :

- 1. This innovative approach to learning was very popular with the targeted client group.*
- 2. After the initial nervousness of using the speech input, this proved to be very effective and overcame the barrier of speaking in front of others.*
- 3. Access to different voices helped pronunciation.*
- 4. ELLIS supports differentiation.*

The IT resourced environment proved to be a real 'hook' for the learners taking part in this Spalding based project.

The one project where IT was used significantly that did not produce such positive results was the 'Discovery' arcade game. Within the Partnership network it has long been considered that this innovative product could have a major impact on participation rates for young adult males. Last year the Lincolnshire and Rutland Partnership contracted a mapping of the game to the Core Curriculum for literacy. This exercise proved that by playing the game and reaching certain 'zones', the user would potentially be able to demonstrate an improvement in their communication skills. The Boston partnership agreed to pilot the use of the game in pubs as one of their projects. Unfortunately the pubs in Boston were reluctant to accommodate this research activity. The evaluation report notes : *"No participation from many organisations who suggested earlier that they would be interested, mainly due to lack of computer facilities and in the pub environment the fact that a multiuse machine such as a PC could very easily be tampered with or misused"*. The game remains as a fascinating example of embedded basic skills and although the research commissioned by the Boston Partnership was inconclusive, further work may provide the feedback needed to establish whether or not this type of software has a role to play in the delivery of basic skills.

Section Six - Conclusions

The project has been very successful in terms of participation. A total of 343 learners are expected to have engaged with basic skills provision as a result of this initiative. The total LID funding allocated to the project was £50000. This suggests that it has cost less than £200 per learner to engage the participants. Given the focus on 'hard to reach' learners this represents very good value for money.

The project has been successful in terms of capacity building. The link with the ESF funded signposting project and the CPD initiative has led to a joined-up approach to the provision of literacy, language and numeracy provision opportunities in many parts of the two counties.

The project has made a significant contribution to raising the profile of basic skills. Specifically the 'Dissemination of Good Practice' event at Grantham College has allowed other providers access to models of delivery that have proven successful.

The profile of the learners suggests that the project has achieved the goal of engaging hard-to-reach learners. The following client groups have engaged with this initiative : (i) SureStart clients, (ii) learners with Mental Health issues, (iii) Travellers, (iv) parents of young children, (v) adult learners in Mablethorpe (vi) DTTO clients, (vii) Addaction clients, (viii) young adult males, (ix) learners in remote communities (x) migrant workers and their partners, (xi) learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and (xii) learners in deprived wards in the larger towns in Lincolnshire

The project activity has been made possible by the efforts of the committed individuals who attend and support their local learning partnerships. The levels of participation and the variety of the opportunities on offer would not have been observed without this commitment and their belief that effective partnership working helps to deliver the best service to the learner. Although LID funding is unlikely to be available next session, it is hoped that continued collaborative provision will continue to support the widening participation agenda in Lincolnshire and Rutland.

Section Seven – Recommendations

The major successes of this project have been to raise the profile of basic skills locally and to offer interesting and diverse opportunities to hard-to-reach learners. The challenge now is to capitalise on the momentum and continue to ensure through the partnership network that a collaborative approach to provision is pursued.

It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership ESF funding for basic skills signposting is used to support a creative approach to exploring community based Skills for Life provision.

It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership play a lead role in ensuring a co-ordinated approach to literacy, language and numeracy provision in the two counties.

It is recommended that the Learning Partnership continue to actively support the development of the CPD network.

It is recommended that the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership continue to build on the productive collaborative arrangements that have been established during the implementation of this project. Specifically, post-16 providers should be encouraged to continue to work together to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and courses.

*Chris Donkin
April 2005*

Appendix I

Summary of the likely interface between the LID LLP Basic Skills contract and the LLP Basic Skills ESF contract

ESF Contracts

The Learning Partnership were successful in bidding for TWO basic skills contracts. One to support learners eligible for support under the 2.1a category and the other for learners eligible for support under the 2.1c category. Both contracts are in the very latter stages of negotiation. Given below is the likely breakdown of funding.

2.1c contract – refers to objective two areas. (Applies principally to partnerships based in the Boston, Horncastle, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough areas)

Total sum of money awarded	£66666
Funding for childcare, beneficiary travel, advertising, project management, stationery, telephones, admin etc etc	£33066
Funding allocated to partnerships for basic skills signposting (NB the theme must be either ESOL, hard-to-reach learners or ‘embedded basic skills’)	£33600
Amount of funding for signposting per partnership	£4800
Amount of funding for signposting per partnership per year (NB the ESF contract is for two academic session – i.e. 04-05 and 05-06)	£2400
Target number of beneficiaries assisted	700
Target number of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome	420
Notional target number of beneficiaries assisted per Partnership	100
Number of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome	60

2.1a contract – refers to non objective two areas (Applies principally to partnerships based in the Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth areas)

Total sum of money awarded	£53333
Funding for childcare, beneficiary travel, advertising, project management, stationery, telephones, admin etc etc	£21333
Funding allocated to partnerships for basic skills signposting (NB the theme must be either ESOL, hard-to-reach learners or ‘embedded basic skills’)	£32000
Amount of funding for signposting per partnership	£8000
Amount of funding for signposting per partnership per year (NB the ESF contract is for two academic session – i.e. 04-05 and 05-06)	£4000
Target number of beneficiaries assisted	300
Target number of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome	200
Notional target number of beneficiaries assisted per Partnership	75
Number of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome	50

As can be seen from the tables above, each partnership has a ‘notional’ target for signposting. These targets can be vired between partnerships funded in the same contract. However, it is clear that the partnerships within the ‘2.1a’ contract are likely to be more generously supported. Hence attempts have been made to even out the funding per partnership by allocating the LID funding in a slightly different way to last session.

The LID Contract

The Learning Partnership have been successful in securing LID funding to support basic skills action research projects in session 04-05. Last session the funding directed to the partnerships was £33k and was allocated £3k per partnership. This session the funding directed to the partnerships is £30k. The proposal is to allocate this funding as follows :

Total funding directed to the local Learning Partnerships	£30000
Funding allocated to the '2.1a' partnerships (i.e. Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth)	£6000
Funding allocated to the '2.1c' partnerships (i.e. Boston, Horncastle, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough)	£21000
Funding 'unallocated' and available for special projects	£3000
Funding allocated to each of the '2.1a' partnerships (i.e. Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth) in session 04-05.	£1500
Funding allocated to each of the '2.1c' partnerships (i.e. Horncastle, Boston, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough) in 04-05	£3000

The interface between the two contracts

As can be seen, every effort has been made to ensure that each partnership receives roughly the same allocation to support basic skills work in their area. Below is a summary of how the funding from the two different sources have been used to ensure that each partnership receives roughly the same amount of funding for basic skills work in 2004-05

Funding allocated to each of the '2.1a' partnerships (i.e. Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth) in session 04-05 from ESF contract	£4000
Funding allocated to each of the '2.1a' partnerships (i.e. Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth) in session 04-05 from LID contract	£1500
Total funding allocated to each of the '2.1a' partnerships (i.e. Spalding, Rutland, Stamford and Louth) in session 04-05.	£5500

Funding allocated to each of the '2.1c' partnerships (i.e. . Horncastle, Boston, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough) in session 04-05 from ESF contract	£2400
Funding allocated to each of the '2.1c' partnerships (i.e. . Horncastle, Boston, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough) in session 04-05 from LID contract	£3000
Total funding allocated to each of the '2.1c' partnerships (i.e. . Horncastle, Boston, Coastal, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford and Gainsborough) in session 04-05.	£5400

The short story ...

Each learning partnership is likely to receive about £5.5k from the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning Partnership to support *Skills for Life* developments in their area in session 2004-05.

Chris Donkin - 21st September 2004