

Building the Capacity to Deliver Basic Skills: Leicestershire and Leicester City Local Learning Partnership Approach

Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership Skills for Life Working Group

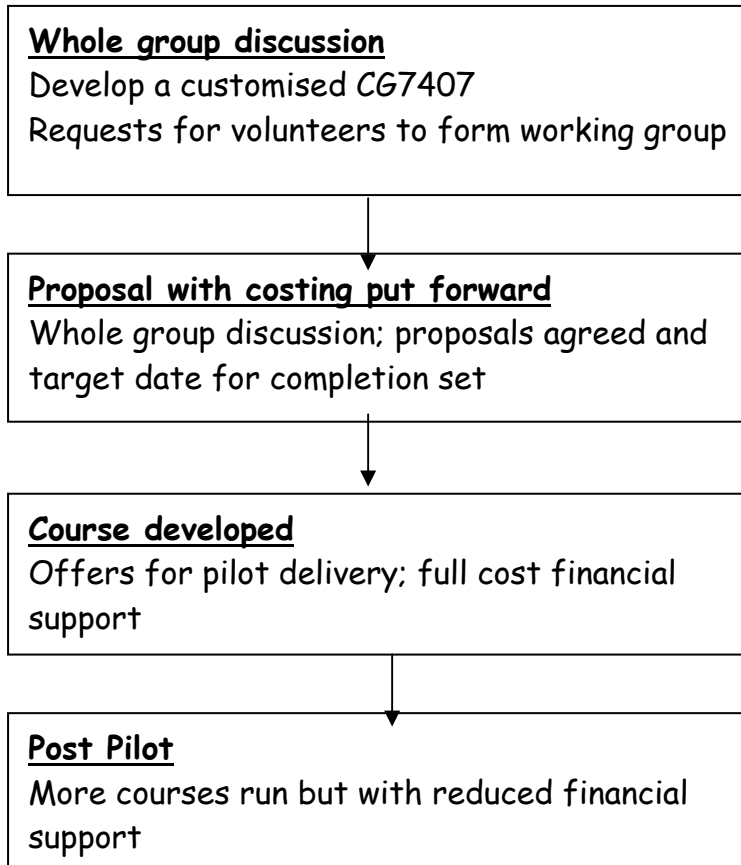
In Leicestershire we are fortunate to have an active and effective learning partnership. The "Skills for Life" working group has representation from all educational providers and most of the voluntary sector organisations. Because of this strong tradition of working together in the interests of learners and active support from our local LSC, we have been successful in securing ESF and Local Initiative funding to help us develop the capacity to deliver the challenging government targets for new learners.

In common with many other areas our pool of tutors was woefully insufficient to deliver the learners. Our initial strategy was to develop a customised City and Guilds 7407 Stage 1 course that would cover the generic elements of a 'standard' 7407 but would be delivered in the context of literacy and numeracy. We later went on to develop a course to enable experienced tutors of other disciplines to transfer their skills into the "Skills for Life" area.

City and Guilds CG 7407 for Literacy/Numeracy

At our monthly partnership meeting in September 2002 we discussed the best way to recruit and train new tutors now that the CG9281 route was no longer available. We decided that a customised CG7407 Stage 1 would be the best option. The course would be free to participants and would provide a twenty-hour voluntary teaching placement. The Learning Partnership would fund the development and delivery of this course.

The pattern of decision making and delivery outlined below is one that has been followed on a wide variety of continuing professional development courses that the partnership has gone on to develop.



Bridging Course for "Skills for Life"

The customised CG7407 was very successful as an initial teacher-training tool for people with no teaching qualifications but was not suitable for people who had already got teaching qualifications and considerable experience in other subject specialisms.

Initially, the "Skills for Life" group decided that a non-accredited introductory course should be developed and proposals were put forward in the same way as the CG7407. However, as the sub group started to develop the course we decided to apply for accreditation through our local Open College. OCNSEM were so interested that they took on the task of writing the units and there are now two NOCN units at level three.

Where are we now?

- We have offered customised CG7407 across Leicester and Leicestershire for the past three years, and the Bridging Course for two years, with a variety of providers being involved. This has

enabled us to bring new tutors into the system to help build up our capacity to deliver.

- Members of the partnership went on to develop a customised ESOL CG7407 and are considering developing a Bridging Course for ESOL
- We have a large pool of literacy tutors but there is still a shortage of numeracy and ESOL tutors
- We are now focussing on continuing professional development for existing staff

Personal Perspective

I have been involved in developing and delivering both the CG7407 and the Bridging course.

The benefits of working in partnership to develop courses are enormous:

- Partnership funding enables developments that could not otherwise happen
- Pooling expertise enables high quality courses and materials to be produced in a relatively short time
- Decisions about where courses are to be offered ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication or rivalry
- Using the same course materials ensures consistency of quality

Delivering the courses is very enjoyable, and although we have customised and updated the materials the comprehensive pack developed has proved invaluable.

- Teaching placements are the key to success on both courses and are the most difficult thing to get right. Choosing a host tutor who can provide a model of good practice and is willing to hand over all, or part of their class, is not an easy thing to do.
- There is a great deal of work for the course tutors outside the classroom. There is a requirement for three observations for each teacher trainee on the CG7407; considerable tutorial support is needed and host tutors need training and support
- Sharing the delivery, especially for the CG7407, is advisable

The majority of the tutors we trained have gained employment in "Skills for Life" teaching, several of them in our college. They will all go on to achieve a full level 4 generic FENTO qualification and a level 4 subject specialism. "Growing your own" has distinct advantages!

Conclusions

Cooperation between local providers and the support of the LSC to secure funding enable local priorities to be met in a sensible and effective manner.

The model of consultation and commissioning used for the development and delivery of the *CG7407* and the *Bridging Course for Skills for Life* has been replicated for many other professional development initiatives.

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