

February 2010

Welcome to our first news update of 2010.

A lot has happened since our last newsletter, we have achieved the Training Quality Standard (TQS), we are now lead partner of the Schools Workforce Partnership (SWP) and in October last year we secured a contract with Yorkshire Forward to continue operating the Integrated Skills Brokerage for the Public Sector Services in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Inside this issue we take a closer look at 2develop and how it is currently being used by Middlesbrough Council, how learning and skills providers are benefiting from the Business Interchange programme and information about the Public Sector Skills Brokerage.

Hope you enjoy this issue!

Stacey Redman, Editor



Case Studies

If you and your organisation would like to feature in one of our case studies and possibly be included in one of our bi-yearly newsletters please contact either Stacey Redman or Ashleigh Dalton on:

01904 612 231

Alternatively you can email STAR at:

star@star-tc.co.uk



Latest News

Workforce Intelligence - Meeting your mandatory requirements

STAR has been working with a number of Local Authorities nationally to meet their requirements for collecting and collating workforce data. We have developed an online tool to help Local Authorities to collect the data they require by department to assist with meeting national minimum datasets, the Skills Pledge and other data requirements.

STAR is currently working closely with Middlesbrough Council and has developed an online system to meet the Social Care minimum data set. In addition to this we are in the process of creating a system to meet the data set for the Children and Young People's Workforce. For further information on how Middlesbrough Council is utilising this tool please see **pages 4 & 5**.

To find out more about our online tools and how they could help you please contact us on **01904 612 231**

A helping hand with skills for the Public Sector

STAR has been providing consultancy support to Public Sector organisations in Yorkshire and Humber for over 2 years through the Integrated Skills Brokerage Service. The support service, funded by Yorkshire Forward, assists Public Sector organisations to identify their training needs, find appropriate training provision, source possible funding and fulfil the skills pledge.

Organisations accessing the service can now benefit from a free online tool to assist with identifying training needs to fulfil the skills pledge.

To see how Bradford Metropolitan District Council are making use of this service please see **pages 6 & 7**.

For further information on how we can help your organisation please contact us on **01904 612 231**

Celebrating Achievement of the Training Quality Standard

STAR is proud to announce that we have achieved the Training Quality Standard (TQS) with excellence in Children's Workforce in Schools, becoming only the second provider nationally to achieve with this sector specialism.

The Training Quality Standard is an assessment framework and certification process which upon achievement recognises an organisation's expertise in delivering high quality training and development.

We believe strongly in sharing best practice and our experienced consultants are able to offer support to organisations to achieve standards including Investors in People, Matrix and TQS.

For further information please contact us on **01904 612 231**

Support Work in Schools

STAR has supported over 170 Parent Support Advisors within schools to achieve the Support Work in Schools (PSA) Qualification. We have been delivering this qualification since the pilot inception in 2006.

New research from the TDA shows that almost 60% of schools are now benefiting from parent support advisors. The role is designed to support parents to interact with the school and other support services to assist their children to reach their learning potential. For more information on the differences PSA's are making in schools please visit www.tda.gov.uk

For further information on our training delivery please contact Mark Bradbury on **01904 612 231**

Can your organisation benefit from the Business Interchange Project?

Business Interchange is a government funded programme that aims to ensure teachers working in further education have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of their sector by placing them back into industry.

Business Interchange has so far supported over 1400 teachers to undertake a vocational placement and the feedback from providers and hosts alike has been excellent.

Appointed by LLUK, STAR provides a national co-ordinator service to support organisations with such things as finding hosts and arranging placements.

To find out more about this project please see **page 8**. Alternatively you can contact Ashleigh Dalton on **01904 612 231** or visit www.businessinterchange.org

Supporting Excellence in Schools

STAR has recently become lead partner in the Schools Workforce Partnership (SWP). The SWP is an alliance of organisations committed to promoting progression and excellent practice within schools to develop a world class children's workforce.

Operating nationally, we aim to support the children's workforce in schools to access a range of affordable training and can also provide schools with effective workforce solutions and first class consultancy support. Through this we promote progression and excellent practice based on a quality approach that meets the needs of both employers and the rapidly changing workforce.

For further information on the partnership visit www.schoolswp.org

2develop assists Council to meet National Minimum Data Sets

A case study on how Middlesbrough Council is utilising 2develop, our online system, to meet National Minimum Data Sets and the Skills Pledge

Local Authorities are now encouraged to provide information about their Social Care Workforce to Skills for Care in order to meet the National Minimum Data Set. However, Social Care Departments are facing difficulties as data must first be collated before it is logged on to the Skills for Care online system. No small task for such large organisations.

Middlesbrough Council first approached STAR regarding their obligation to report on the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care after hearing of successful 2develop pilots taking place in the North East.

The Council works closely with the North East Regional Employers Organisation (NEREO) who put forward two companies with the capability to meet the requirements of the skills audit.

Representatives from all departments attended a demonstration by both organisations.

After much consideration 2develop was unanimously voted the preferred system. This decision was based upon the flexibility and functionality of the tool which would not only enable the Council to capture data on the Social Care Workforce but would also allow them to progress the Skills Pledge and GO Award while



'Star and the 2develop system have been very helpful in supporting the Council to achieve its objectives around workforce planning and data collection.' **Laura Neale, Middlesbrough Council**

providing data required to inform workforce planning across the Council. A questionnaire incorporating the Wider Children's Workforce questions for the Children's, Families and Learning department is also currently under development.

Some Features of the tool include:

- An 'about you' questionnaire designed to specification, capturing data required by individual departments and by the whole Council.
- Literacy and Numeracy Mini tests.
- Instant reporting available by department and whole Council combined.
- Data download function into the required format for reporting national minimum data set requirements.

2develop assists Council to meet National Minimum Data Sets

Initial work on the skills audit tool began in May 2009, with approval to conduct the workforce skills audit within the authority being granted in June.

The system launched early November 2009 and will continue to be rolled out until the end of March 2010. The Children, Families and Learning Department will most likely continue on after this as their questionnaire is still being developed, due to delays in government approval of the Wider Children's Workforce data requirements.

The Council is pleased with progress that has been made and positive results are expected, based on the current position of the project. It is hoped that the data collected will result in employees being targeted for skills for life training in literacy and numeracy and for the system to be updated regularly, as and when it is necessary to do so.

On the benefits of using this audit tool Laura Neale, Organisational Development Project Assistant at Middlesbrough Council stated:

'It is expected that as a result of undertaking this skills audit project, we will gain more insightful and useful data on the skills of our workforce, than any data we have had previously. This will enable us to better assess the organisation's skills gaps and thus the skills needs of the workforce. The results of the project will contribute to the organisation's workforce planning activities and the data collected will enable the organisation to be able to plan more effectively for the future.'

For more information or advice on this online tool
please contact STAR on:
01904 612 231

The Integrated Skills Brokerage for the Public Sector Services is a support service funded by Yorkshire Forward. The service offers public sector organisations independent advice and guidance in undertaking a training needs analysis, sourcing training provision and possible funding for training.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council first got in touch with the Service in April 2008. Mike Gill from Education Contract Services (now part of Facilities Management) initially contacted the service in the hope that a comprehensive learning programme for staff could be developed.

Mike, along with his colleagues had identified several issues within the catering and cleaning departments that could possibly have further ramifications throughout other areas of the Council:

- A large number of manual grade employees whose command of the English language was not sufficient to adequately meet the full requirements of their job roles.
- An ageing workforce of supervisors and middle managers, specifically within school catering, and no staff coming through the ranks capable of stepping up to fill these positions.
- A high proportion of supervisors and middle managers who had received no formal supervisory or management training and although in positions of responsibility over other staff did not have the requisite skills to manage or supervise those staff effectively.



STAR's Senior Business Consultant Lee Reddington was assigned to the authority as a Skills Broker. From an initial meeting with Mike it was identified that in varying degrees these issues applied to over 2000 members of staff within Facilities Management.

Lee suggested a number of approaches to these problems. This included setting up a service level agreement with a group of providers who would be able to address the problems identified through a combination of training programmes. These training programmes included Literacy and Numeracy training, NVQ Level 2 Team Leader, NVQ Level 3 First Line Manager, NVQ Levels 2 & 3 Customer Service, and NVQ Levels 2 & 3 Business Improvement Techniques.

All of these training programmes (depending upon individual eligibility) are capable of being fully



funded through Train to Gain and Skills for Life funding. It was agreed at this stage that Lee would identify potential training providers and introduce them to the Council. Discussions could then be held around how training would be delivered and identified with the prospective providers and attitudes towards partnership working could be assessed.

Whilst at a Local Government Yorkshire & Humber partnership (LGYH) meeting, Lee came into contact with Gill Charlesworth. As Human Resources Business Manager at Bradford Council, Gill was responsible for the authority's corporate approach to the Skills Pledge. Lee updated Gill on the work already underway and suggested a meeting between Gill and Mike Gill to share ideas and to jointly look at the prospective providers.

Over a period of several months providers were introduced to and interviewed by Mike and Gill and six providers were chosen to deliver all programmes.

During the following months Bradford Council signed the Skills Pledge and held an event incorporating all six providers to plan the promotion and implementation of the skills strategy. A service level agreement was signed with all six partners and with the help of Val Priestley (Human Resources Officer – Bradford Council) each provider was assigned with a directorate to target.

Regular provider group meetings were arranged where any problems could be raised and workload could be shared. This process has so far generated over 1800 learner referrals.

Regarding this process Trevor Cox, Managing Director of Phoenix Training Services stated:

'I would like to thank the Brokerage Service for the effective contribution they have brought to the Bradford Council project. As there are 6 organisations delivering in this project, their comments and actions have assisted to ensure that all parties have had an equal and fair input to accessing the training opportunities. I also feel it has been invaluable that the Brokerage Service has been able to liaise with the funders directly and respond to the forum with their responses, very speedily. I therefore confirm that I feel that their services as a Broker to this project, has enabled it to be a success and would have no hesitation in recommending their services to other providers.'

Further learners have been identified and are currently awaiting funding. STAR continues to work with the Council and the Providers in order to continue progress.

On the overall service provided by STAR, Mike Gill commented:

'We have been more than happy with the help and support received from STAR and in particular STAR's representative, Lee Reddington. We are particularly pleased with the way the service was tailored to our needs and the way organisations which fitted with our goals were introduced to us. In short a very professional service.'

For more information regarding this project please contact STAR on:
01904 612 231



The Business Interchange project is a government funded programme that aims to help further education providers increase their vocational expertise to meet the needs of their sector by placing teachers, tutors and trainers back into industry.

Tyneside Training Services, a provider of road transport training since 1969, has always taken pride in delivering the highest level of training. Having experienced great success in the pilot phase of this programme, Tyneside Training Services were keen to offer further staff members the opportunity to update their skills.

Following an initial visit from STAR advisor Sheila Craggs, a placement was set up for assessor Dennis Cowley to make several visits to local employer, Springfield Honda.

Dennis felt that getting back into industry would enable him to maintain his current knowledge of the industry which is often difficult to do when teaching full time. This would be of benefit to all learners on the Motor Vehicle programme at the centre.

Line Manager, Allan McNaught believed that a work based placement would be ideal as a way to ensure assessors are up to date with current industry best practice and modern diagnostic techniques utilised in Main Dealers.

Having spent several days observing and working with the workshop staff at the Honda garage and carrying out diagnostic procedures on customers' vehicles, Dennis can now relate his experience on

the work placement to his own work as an MOT Tester. In addition to this he can relate his experience to current 3rd year Apprentices during both classroom and workshop sessions. He has also been able to compare his experiences with colleagues who have visited different employers. As a result Dennis was able to develop a Task Safety Analysis that met both the syllabus and current best practice.

On the impact of his placement Dennis Cowley stated:

'The diagnostic techniques learned were relevant in that they covered up to date current industry best practice as used by mainstream manufacturers in their dealerships. I am now more confident when giving practical demonstrations of diagnostic procedures as I am able to relate the experience gained from my visit and comparison with colleagues directly to the learners own experience and learning against the criteria of the NVQ.'

As a result of the placement programme's success Tyneside Training's next annual staff appraisal will be encouraging assessors to carry out follow up visits to employers as part of their CPD.

For more information regarding this project please contact STAR on:
01904 612 231





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