

Kent Local Authority was one of the pilot areas for the implementation of Parent Support Advisors (PSAs). Unable to find a local provider that could take on all of the candidates to do the Support Work in Schools (PSA) VQ, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) recommended STAR.

Learners began their qualification in March 2008 and due to the distance between STAR's offices in York and Kent the qualification was delivered through a series of workshops with continuous email and telephone support provided by assessor/advisor Mark Bradbury.

18 of the 20 learners completed the qualification, handing their portfolios back to STAR in November.

Manager of Family Liaison Officers and Parent Support advisors at Kent, Wendy Mann said:

*'STAR made the whole process extremely straightforward. It was obvious at the outset that they fully understood the needs of the qualification and that of the learner. They have looked at delivering this in a holistic way and have always put the learners first.'*

*'Being at a distance has never been a problem. Queries are always dealt with quickly and learners have valued this way of contact. I would not have continued with this if things had not gone well. The fact that we will have two cohorts running should show our satisfaction with working with STAR.'*



Individual PSAs commented on this way of working as the best way to complete the qualification. They valued not having to attend many sessions out of school and liked the independence to be able to get on. However they also commented that STAR was always available for help and advice.

Parent Support Advisor, Carole Mann stated:

*'The programme was run very efficiently; the tutor was extremely knowledgeable and approachable. It was a pleasurable learning experience.'*

Working with STAR provided an opportunity for as many of the PSAs within the pilot to complete the qualification which would have otherwise not been possible. Ultimately they were able to achieve recognition for the work they are doing by completing a qualification that matches their role.



Manager Wendy also commented:

*'STAR has enabled us to provide professional development opportunities for the PSAs in the pilot and now with our Family Liaison Officers. We will work with them to review future needs and will look to them for support and advice.'*

*'They have also provided excellent support to myself as a manager – distance has never affected what we have been able to achieve.'*

STAR began a second cohort of learners in Kent in June 2009 and a third cohort is due to start in October 2009.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact STAR using the number below.

