

Final Report on the Learning for Work Project



**Dumfries and Galloway
Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Partnership**

April 2008



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Introduction

This is the Final Report on the Learning for Work Project which was one of seven projects that were grant funded by the Scottish Government in 2006/7 to explore innovative approaches to workplace literacies.

The project was undertaken by the Learning for Work Team and managed by a steering group on behalf of the Dumfries and Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Partnership.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following people and organisations who have contributed to the project:

Employers

- Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway
- Solway Structural Steel
- Youngs Seafood Ltd
- Applied Care and Development
- Smiths at Gretna Green
- Shortridges Dry Cleaning
- NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- EME Furniture
- Gillespie Leisure Limited
- Dumfries and Galloway Fire Service
- Brown Brothers
- Pinneys of Scotland

Dumfries and Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Partnership

The members of the Learning for Work Steering Group:

- Carol Turnbull, Dumfries and Galloway College
- Lynn Grieve, Scottish Enterprise, Dumfries and Galloway
- Mhairi Gilfillan, Literacies Development Co-ordinator, Learning Connections, Scottish Government
- Lindsey Mason, Training Partner, learndirect scotland
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1. Project aims and milestones

1.1 The purpose of the project

The Learning for Work project was designed to improve workplace literacies in Dumfries and Galloway by setting out a written framework to help all the parties involved to have a better understanding of good practice and their roles and responsibilities.

The project aims were based on recommendations contained in a report for the Dumfries and Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership in September 2006 called **Workplace Literacies Programmes in Dumfries and Galloway** (2006)¹.

The report identified a number of actions that the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership might wish to consider, including the development of the following:

1. A code of practice for engaging with employers in workplace literacies programmes
2. A workplace literacies pack for employers
3. Good practice guidelines for practitioners
4. Assessment tools, for the workplace environment and for employees
5. Resource materials to support tutors delivering integrated literacies programmes in vocational areas such as Health and Safety, Customer Care, Construction, Hospitality, and Residential and Home Care
6. Accreditation opportunities for learners.

1.2 The Project Outline

The project was originally designed to be undertaken in three stages:

Stage one: Resource materials development

Stage two: Piloting the resource materials

Stage three: Evaluation of the project processes and products

1.3 Project outputs

The project aimed to produce resource materials based on consultation with employers and practitioners and then pilot them with two or more employers in Dumfries and Galloway.

1.4 The resource materials

The original project proposal indicated that the project would investigate the development and production of the following materials:

- **A Code of Practice for Employers and the Employers' Pack** to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties, employer, provider and employee
- **A Good Practice Guide for Practitioners** will clarify the roles and responsibilities of literacies practitioners and tutors within workplace learning
- **Assessment Tools** to assess the literacies needs of the workplace in general and also the needs of individual learners
- **Teaching and learning materials** to suit the needs of the occupational areas and the employees of the two pilot companies.

1.5 Original milestones

January to August 2007 – production of all project materials

September to November 2007 – draft materials piloted in two companies

November to December 2007 – evaluation of draft materials and their impact on practice, followed by revision and printing of the materials

January 2008 – a dissemination event

1.6 Project staff

The project was managed by a Project Steering Group appointed by The Dumfries and Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) Strategic Partnership.

The original proposal included the following staff to make up the project team:

Project Leader- ALN Manager

Project Coordinator – to be appointed

Materials Development Tutor – to be appointed

Consultant to Steering Group to undertake the evaluation of the project

¹ "Workplace Literacies Programmes in Dumfries and Galloway" a report for the Dumfries and Galloway ALN Partnership, September 2006

1.7 Appointment of Project Coordinator

The post of project coordinator was processed by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Personnel Department. The post was advertised in February 2006, short-listing took place on 6th March and interviews on 21st March. Immediately following this the Council put a freeze on all appointments pending the resolution of their single status negotiations. By the time the freeze was lifted in May the first choice candidate had found another job and the second choice candidate had his agreement for a secondment withdrawn by his employer.

After negotiations with Learning Connections it was agreed that there was not enough time left to re-advertise the post as 4 months of the 12 month project had already passed.

The project milestones were renegotiated and at the end of April it was agreed that the work would be undertaken by the Project Leader, Materials Development Tutor and the External Consultant operating as a team:

- The Project Leader took responsibility for the Practitioners Pack
- The Materials Development Worker was given increased hours to assist the Project Leader
- The External Consultant was allocated additional hours to work with employers on the Code of Practice and the Pack for Employers

Then

- A 'Graduate into Business' was recruited from 24th July 2007 to organise the dissemination event, assist with the Employers' and Practitioners' Pack and work with the printers and graphics to produce the materials.

1.8 Reorganised milestones from May 2007

By May so much time had been lost trying to recruit a Project Coordinator that a reorganisation of the project outcomes and milestones became inevitable.

The rescheduled timetable was completed as follows:

June to September: The proposed project materials were discussed with employers and practitioners. Eleven employers across Dumfries and Galloway were interviewed and meetings were held with practitioners.

October: The draft materials were circulated for consultation locally and nationally. The same eleven local employers were re-contacted and ten revisited for their comments. Meetings were held with local practitioners. The materials were also circulated nationally to Learning Connections and the other national workplace learning pilot projects. A wide range of comments were obtained and a number of changes were made to the materials.

November/December: The final versions of the documents were agreed and sent to the Council's Graphics Department. Employers were invited to bid for pilot projects.

January 31st 2008: A dissemination event took place in Dumfries.

February/ April 2008: Two companies pilot the materials for an initial evaluation of the impact of the materials.

See: Appendix B for the project financial report.

2. Engagement with employers

2.1 Introduction

The project team decided that it was essential to speak directly with employers to find out their views on what a code of practice for workplace literacies should contain. In deciding how to do this the team had to take into account the geography of Dumfries and Galloway (approximately 100 miles from east to west and 50 miles from north to south) and the predominance of small to medium sized companies. It was felt that it would not be practicable to ask employers to come together to a joint meeting and a series of structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with employers on a fairly tight timescale between June and September 2007.

2.2 The selection of companies

Companies were selected to give a geographical spread and a range of sectors and sizes of companies. A total of 11 companies were interviewed. Only two companies had previously been involved in workplace learning: one through English language programmes for Polish migrant workers, the other through a literacies with IT programme.

ALN Partnership members were helpful in suggesting appropriate organisations to approach. Suggestions came from Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway, learndirect scotland and the Council's Community Learning and Development Service. There was a real benefit in being recommended suitable companies by partners rather than "cold calling" as only one of the 13 organisations approached declined to take part in the project and one company did not have any employees with literacies needs. Each employer, bar one, was interviewed twice; the first time to help to shape the materials and the second time for views on the draft Guide.

The companies came from the following sectors:

- Manufacturing – steel processing, food processing (3 companies) and furniture making
- Service – laundry
- Catering/tourism (2 companies)
- Public sector – NHS Trust, Dumfries and Galloway Council Combined Services Department and Fire Service

The size of the workforces varied from 20 employees through to the largest private sector company interviewed which had 850 employees at the busiest times of year with around 480 who might be mainstream literacies learners. The Council and NHS Trust had around 300 and 100 manual staff respectively.

The organisations that were interviewed were located from Gretna in the east to Creetown in the west, Sanquhar in the north to Dumfries in the south.

2.3 Conclusions from the interviews with employers

- Only the two companies previously involved in workplace learning were already aware that their employees had literacies needs
- As a result of the interviews all employers recognised that some of their employees had literacies needs
- Only the two companies with previous involvement knew how to access help
- None had heard of the Big Plus Campaign
- All were used to adapting work practices to take account of low levels of literacy and numeracy amongst their employees and all could therefore identify the business gains from participation in workplace learning programmes
- All recognised that adult literacy/numeracy is a sensitive issue
- All recognised that there are issues of confidentiality that need to be considered
- Each manager, when asked to explore how a literacies programme might be introduced in their company, offered different solutions. Each solution was well thought through and tailored to their own needs but also showed sensitivity to the needs of the workforce
- There was a general sense that the employers felt that they work in a different environment and culture from that inhabited by learning programme providers and that they do not speak the same language



- If they were to take part, employers said that they would like to be in control of the development of a workplace learning programme. There was a fear that providers might come along with “a one size fits all” solution that might not be suitable for their company. One manager said, “ I am used to dealing with suppliers all the time. I tell them the specification that I need, when I want the goods and the price I can afford. They try to fulfil my specification. When I deal with Colleges they try to tell me what I can have and it is usually a set programme that is only partially what we need and most of it is wide of the mark.”
- Several employers said that they would prefer to speak to a provider from a position of strength. They said that they would prefer to have some idea of the needs of their own workforce and how they might develop a programme before they speak with a provider
- There was no enthusiasm for a code of practice but several employers said they would prefer a straight forward guide that would help them to work with providers to find solutions to fit the needs of their companies

2.4 Summary of employers’ responses

See Appendix A for a summary of what employers said.

3. Consultation on the draft Guide and Packs

3.1 The How to do it Guide

The project team fed back the results of the research with employers to the Learning for Work Steering Group on the 10th October 2007. The two key findings were that employers said they wanted:

- A straightforward, easy to use, Guide rather than a Code of Practice
- To be able to work with the provider from an informed position so that they are able to negotiate a programme that is tailored to and appropriate for the needs of their workforce and company

The original project proposal to the Scottish Government included the following statement. *“At this stage there is a wish not to be too prescriptive about the precise content of the project documents before the consultation process has taken place.”* The wisdom of this caveat was now apparent and the Steering Group agreed that in the light of the research the Project Team should develop a Workplace Literacies “How to do it Guide” for employers. The themes that would have been included in a Code of Practice would now be incorporated into an Employer/Provider Agreement document.

A draft Guide was developed by the Project Team. It was written so that:

- The stages in developing a workplace literacies programme were broken down into easy steps
- An employer could go through the Guide on their own prior to a meeting with the provider or use it to aid the discussion with the provider
- The language used was straightforward and jargon free and designed to appeal to busy managers
- The Guide was kept as short and to the point as possible. Additional information for those managers who wish to have more detail was collated into the Employers’ Pack and the links between the Guide and the Pack clearly signposted

An Employer/Provider Agreement document was drafted setting out the principles that will underpin workplace learning programmes in Dumfries and Galloway.

3.2 Consultation on the draft Guide and Agreement document

3.21 Who was consulted?

The Steering Group agreed that the following people should be asked for their comments on the draft Guide:

- Learning Connections
- The other 7 national workplace learning projects
- Local practitioners
- The employers who were involved in the original consultation

3.22 The results of the consultation

Learning Connections

The key comments from Learning Connections were:

Definition of literacies and use of the term literacies

There was a query on the definition of the term literacies used by the project. (For further comments see Section 8.3)

Learning Connections’ staff pointed out that throughout the draft documents the terms literacies and literacy and numeracy had been interchanged and asked for the word literacies to be used exclusively.

Use of language

Some of the language used in the draft documents was thought to be too direct and there was a request for it to be softened and made more positive. (For further comments see Section 8.3)

Voluntary participation of employees

There was a query as to whether it should be stated within the Pack and the Guide that the employees’ participation in learning programmes must be voluntary. (For further comments see Section 8.5)

Length of the Guide

Learning Connections’ staff felt that the Guide was too long.

Layout and proof reading.

The Project Team was very grateful to Learning Connections’ staff for their help with proof reading and suggestions for alterations to the layout.

National projects

Only one of the national projects, Fife, replied to the request for comments. (For comments see Section 8.4) Their comments are summarised as follows:

The things they liked:

- The step by step approach with supportive information at all stages
- Plain English and easy to understand, using business like language
- Addresses all the relevant areas for employers to consider
- Demonstrates the importance of working together and having management/supervisory support.

Criticisms:

- The length of the document
- Some of the non pc language.

Ideas:

- Some of the steps are too long – better to reference to further information.
- Could be colour coded to pre delivery, delivery and post delivery
- Key stages could be, 'identify the needs' 'plan to meet the needs' 'deliver to meet the needs' and 'evaluate'. More like a typical training cycle
- Consider condensing the flowchart into fewer steps (say 4) but then for example steps, 3,4,5, 6 might be one step
- Try to get the critical information in short snappy paragraphs, with the option of additional reading or checklists/tools separately
- In terms of the definition of workplace literacies I think this is a key issue in all projects. We came up with a definition partners could use to explain things to employers.

"Just like to say well done to you and your team on what you have achieved as it is obvious you have put a lot of work into it. Don't think it needs major adjusting, maybe just a little fine tuning."

Local practitioners

Involvement of practitioners

One of the aims of the project was to produce a good practice guide for literacies practitioners. It was felt that the practitioners' involvement in producing this was essential.

Consultation Meetings

In order to ensure that practitioners' views were reflected in the finished guide, the project team organised a series of consultation meetings throughout 2007. These took place on the 4th April, 13th May and 1st November.

The meeting on the 4th April was attended by 7 practitioners as well as the project team. The meeting explored the principles of workplace literacies, the definition of workplace literacies, engaging with employers, what employers would be expected to provide, awareness raising within companies, induction of the tutor within the company, recognition of employee achievement, and increased engagement in the workplace. The flipcharted notes from the meeting were word processed and circulated for further comment.

On the 13th May, the practitioners present discussed and evaluated draft versions of a list of the key performance indicators and of the Code of Practice for employers and practitioners. A few slight revisions were suggested which were incorporated into the final draft. Overall, it was felt that the project should be more aligned to national campaigns providing this was done creatively. Again, this recommendation influenced the final version of the Guide and Packs.

The final meeting, on the 1 November, was attended by 11 practitioners. The main focus of the day was to evaluate the Guide for Employers and the Employer/Provider Agreement (formerly the Code of Practice). The Guide was examined a page at a time and a list of amendments were noted and then later incorporated into the final version of the document. The general bias of the amendments was in favour of language that reflected the perspective of practitioners rather than employers and in this respect was in keeping with the national literacies perspective. The Employer/Provider Agreement elicited fewer amendments and everyone present agreed it was fit for purpose.

Employers

All of the employers who were interviewed at the beginning of the project were sent copies of the draft Guide and Agreement and all bar one were re-interviewed for their comments.



All found the draft Guide easy to use and well set out. They said that it represented the kind of approach that they were looking for as it allowed them to tease out their own employees' and company's needs and solutions. The approach adopted in the Guide put the employer in the driving seat when negotiating with providers. Several said that they would prefer to go through the Guide independently before contacting the provider.

Two employers wanted more positive language used and for more emphasis on selling the benefits. One suggested the addition of case studies and these were subsequently included in the Pack. Another wanted the contacts page to be shorter and punchier. Only one employer said that the draft Guide was too long and because of this an attempt was made to try to get each step on to one page. There were also suggestions to improve the layout and the wording. Most said that a flyer is needed to go with the Guide.

The skills checklist was popular and a more comprehensive version of this was incorporated in the Pack. Some liked the way that there were reminders at the start of each step of the actions that preceded it. One employer said that when the draft Guide came in the post her heart sank when she thought that she would have to "wade through it", but when she started to read it she found it very easy to read and helpful. In fact she passed it on to her assistant to start work on straight away.

Some changes were also suggested to the Employer/ Provider Agreement. For example, on whether or not attendance on a literacies programme should be voluntary. All agree that this is right in principle but that in practice there may be exceptional circumstances which would make it necessary for employees to be asked to attend. A caveat was written into the Agreement to allow for this. (See Section 8.5)

Suggestions that were not acted upon:

- One employer wanted Step 4 and Step 1 to be reversed i.e. the investigation of the company's needs to come before the assessment of the employees' needs. This suggestion was not accepted as literacies work should always be learner centred
- A public sector employer asked if the word "organisation" could be used instead of "company". This was considered by the Steering Group and rejected
- There was a suggestion that a shorter version of the Guide should be produced for small companies. At some stage a flyer for small companies might be considered.

4. The Workplace Literacies How to do it Guide for Employers, the Employers' Pack and the Providers' Pack

4.1 The materials

At the end of the consultation process changes were made to the project materials and the final versions produced. They are:

The How to do it Guide for Employers

Pack for Employers

Pack for Providers

Following the consultation process the purposes for the materials were also redefined.

4.2 The purpose of the materials

- To help employers to set up workplace literacies programmes
- To put the employer in control of the process
- To help employers work out what they can expect from a provider
- To assist in the negotiations between employer and provider

4.3 The content and structure of the materials

4.3.1 The Employers' Guide and Pack

At the beginning of the Guide and the Employers' Pack is a flowchart which sets out 9 steps in the process of implementing a workplace literacies programme.

The steps are:

1. Identify the employees' needs
2. Select a provider
3. Get managers and supervisors involved
4. Define the objectives
5. Plan a programme
6. Recruit employees onto the programme
7. Implement the programme
8. Conclude the programme
9. Evaluate the programme.

Typically one page of the Guide shows one of the steps, but some spill over onto a second page. A box at the top of the page sets the scene. A middle section gives some questions to think about or some options to consider. The blue boxes at the bottom

of the pages give the link to further information in the Employers' Pack. At each stage the employer is encouraged to work out solutions to suit the needs of his workforce and company. Colour coding is used to make it easier to cross reference between the Guide and the Pack.

4.3.2 The Providers' Pack

The purpose of the Providers Pack is to bring together all the information that practitioners need to help them work with employers to set up workplace learning programmes.

The Providers' Pack also begins with a flow chart which identifies the following stages:

1. Identify the resources available prior to delivery
2. Find about the organisation and its needs
3. Assess the needs of employees
4. Identify specific literacies needs of employees
5. Agree programme details
6. Agree working relationships
7. Plan and deliver learning programme
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of the course and celebrate achievement
9. Identify Future provision.

The Pack for Providers contains some of the same information and tools that are included in the Employers' Pack but it is supplemented with additional information on subjects such as accessing funding and identifying appropriate learning and teaching materials that would not be required by employers.

4.4 The materials launch event

The materials were launched at an event at the Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries on Thursday 31st January 2008.

See **Appendix C** for a report of the launch event.

5. Learning Materials

5.1 Locally Produced Learning Resources

One of the original project aims was to produce learning materials tailored to the individual pilot projects. However, because of the late start of the pilot projects it was not possible to do this, with the exception of the Solway Structural Steel project where worksheets were devised and produced by the tutor delivering the course.

5.2 Website Workplace Learning Resources

Time was allocated to research websites for suitable materials. The best of these was BBC Skillswise (www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise) with its Workplace Survival Kit. This contains contextualised vocabulary resources in the vocational areas of Care, Carpentry, Catering and Hospitality, Childcare, Decorating, Electrics, Plastering, Plumbing. It also has numeracy resources but most of these, unfortunately, are generic materials.

Another useful website is Farmplus, (www.farmplus.ac.uk) but the learning materials here are mainly contextualised to the land based industries.

5.3 Published learning resources

Once it was clear that the development of specific contextualised learning resources for the pilot projects would not be possible, the materials development worker decided to look into published learning resources.

He visited the Independent Learning Centre at Dumfries and Galloway College to view their stock of workplace learning materials. All the materials in use were either from published sources or from BBC Skillswise.

Further research revealed that there were no workplace learning materials available within the Scottish context. All the materials listed by Learning Connections on their website were published in England and mapped to the English Adult Basic Skills Curriculum. The only Scottish resource available was a pack developed in Dumfries & Galloway through Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway for their Step into Care literacies project for care workers.

Using the Learning Connections list, a large stock of workplace literacies learning materials was ordered from Avanti suppliers. This included CDs, CD Roms and photocopiable worksheet resources. All the materials were delivered to the D&G Libraries Service for cataloguing.

All the materials are mapped to the English Curriculum. Because of this, if workplace literacies tutors are thinking of encouraging learners to gain accreditation in Core Skills, they will need to map any of the materials to the Core Skills levels. It should be noted that Core Skills in Workplace Literacies begin at Level 3 of the SCQF (Access 3).

The list of titles is given on page 13.

No. of copies	ISBN	Title	Publisher
5	1898614245	A First Look at Computers	Suffolk County Council
2	1898614490	A First look at Computers-Companion	Suffolk CC
3	1898614547	Make Your English Work in Food Hygiene	Suffolk CC
3	9781905309412	Food Safety at Work	Suffolk CC
5	0906717426	Basic Telephone Training	Thomson Learning
3	1898614253	Belonging to a Trade Union	Suffolk County Council
3	9781905309542	Communication for Care	Suffolk County Council
4	1898614210	Communication for Supervisors: How to get the best from your team at work	Suffolk County Council
4	1898614164	Customer Care for Frontline Staff	Suffolk County Council
3	0471852058	Dyslexia in Adults: Education and Employment	John Wiley and Sons
3	189864563	Form Filling at Work: A writer's guide	Suffolk County Council
2	1898614458	Getting the Basics Right in Amenity Horticulture: Employee Workbook	Suffolk County Council
4	1898614415	Getting the Basics Right in Hospitality: Employee Workbook	Suffolk County Council
4	189861444X	Getting the Basics right: Meat and Poultry	Suffolk CC
4	1898614431	Getting the Basics Right in Early Years: Employee Workbook	Suffolk County Council
4	1898614261	Getting Your Message Across	Suffolk County Council
3	1898614369	Giving Instructions at Work	Suffolk County Council
4		Handwriting Skills: An invaluable Guide for where clear handwriting is needed n the workplace	Suffolk County Council
3	189861427X	Health and Safety at Work: A Workplace Skills Pack	Suffolk County Council
4	0950892939	Health and Safety Workpack	Norfolk County Council
4	1843120224	Literacy for Childcare Students: A basic skills guide	David Fulton Publishers
3	1898614288	Managing Change at Work: A Workplace Skills Pack	Suffolk County Council
4	1898614466	Numeracy in Care: A Numeracy Skills Pack for Care Assistants	Suffolk County Council
3	0646166026	Numeracy on the Line: Language Based Numeracy Activities for Adults	ARIS
3		Skillbuilders Set of Literacy and Numeracy Titles	Axis
4	1898614350	So You Only Teach Literacy? Maths is Fun! An introduction to teaching numeracy for literacy tutors	Suffolk County Council
3	1898614202	The Power of Effective Writing at Work: A writing skills pack for a technical environment	Suffolk County Council
3	1898614296	Using Cashless Pay	Training Matters
3	0730660184	Working Words; A Users Guide to Witten Communication at Work	ARIS
3	1898614199	Writing Business Letters	Suffolk County Council
3	1898614318	Writing for Workmates: Producing a newsletter	Suffolk County Council
3	1898614385	Writing Skills for Small Businesses	Suffolk County Council
5	1842810006	Writing to Suit the Purpose	Oxford County Council

6. The Pilot Projects

The final stage of the Learning for Work Project was to try out the new materials with two local companies.

In November 2007 the 11 companies that had assisted with the development of the project materials were asked to bid for the opportunity to take part in a pilot project. The companies would receive payment for their employees' time spent on the course as an incentive to take part and as compensation for helping to evaluate the materials.

Two companies submitted project proposals: Solway Structural Steel in Creetown and Pinneys of Scotland based in Annan. They were notified of their success in December 2007

Solway Structural Steel, Creetown

Solway Structural Steel is a company that supplies steel girders for a range of constructions such as Tesco super stores, football stadiums and schools. It employs around 50 full time fabricators in the small town of Creetown in Wigtownshire.

The company is involved in workplace learning for its Polish workers and currently 20 of them are undertaking SQA Access Level ESOL courses through Dumfries and Galloway College.

The local workforce has been indicating for some time that they too would welcome the chance to take part in workplace learning. The works manager decided to explore the possibilities of a basic numeracy course which would help employees to progress from basic calculations, fractions and decimals to an understanding of the basic trigonometry required by welders when assembling steel girders for building constructions.

The course involved 18 employees divided between 3 groups. It took place for one hour per week per group between January and March 2008.



Pinneys of Scotland, Annan

Pinneys is a fish processing factory producing high quality fish products and 86% of its production goes to supply Mark and Spencers. According to season, Pinneys employs between 650 and 850 people making it the largest single site private employer in Dumfries & Galloway. It has between 150 and 200 Eastern Europeans in the workforce. The majority of workforce are unionised, unskilled/semi-skilled and live within 5 miles of the site.

The Human Resources Manager was keen to introduce a course that would support employees' capabilities to carry out every day tasks within the factory. This included: understanding and reading factory procedures, dealing with numbers, counting and weighing and following company protocols.

See Appendix D for the evaluation of the pilot projects.

7. The Future – the implementation plan

7.1 Workplace Literacies Implementation Steering Group

At the last Dumfries &Galloway ALN Strategic Partnership meeting on the 13th February 2008, it was proposed that a small steering group should be formed to take forward workplace literacies in the region following on from the end of the Learning for Work Project. Their main brief was to work on a mapping exercise which would then be presented at a Strategic Partnership Meeting on 19th March 2008. This meeting, however, was cancelled. At the time of writing the next Partnership meeting is scheduled for May 2008.

The members of the Workplace Literacies Implementation Steering Group are: John Carroll, Principal Officer, HMP Dumfries; Martyn Haines, Deputy Principal, Barony College; and Mark Williams, ALN Training Officer, D&G ALN Partnership.

7.2 First Meeting of the Workplace Literacies Implementation Steering Group 5th March 2008

The group considered the outline of a two phase approach. The outline consisted of:

a position statement, which would take account of current provision and capacity; the completed evaluation of the Learning For Work pilot projects (due at the end of March 2008) and a training plan for tutors requiring training for workplace literacies delivery (with costs);

followed by **an initial roll out**, due in September 2008, of further workplace literacies programmes, which would require promotion, targets for number of employers and employees, number of staff hours required and set-up and delivery time with costs.

The outline was used as the basis for discussion, which generated a more detailed consideration and further ideas for taking workplace literacies forward in the region.

Demand from employers

It was felt that the position statement should also take account of demand from employers. This demand could be stimulated by awareness raising and publicity of the Guide and Pack. This would then inform the capacity requirements for delivery of the service.



Market Research

Delivery should also be informed by market research. For instance, it would be informative to identify which companies have the resources to run learning programmes. Another aspect that might usefully be ascertained is whether companies have the scope for a mentoring approach to literacies support (See below under Training).

In the short term, the evaluation of the pilot projects should indicate how resource intensive such programmes are for companies. A research report carried out by Rona Gunnell was published by the D&G ALN Partnership last year but further research needs to be carried out. The Barony College has a market research tool, Questback, which could be utilised for this purpose.

Promotion

What is needed here is a communication strategy to market the service and the features and benefits of the pack. Work has already begun on this. Fliers have been designed for distribution to prospective employers. Several adverts have appeared in all the local newspapers in the region aimed at employers inviting them to phone the ALN helpline number to order a Guide and Pack. Packs have been distributed to the D&G Chamber of Commerce, SEDG, Business Gateway and Careers Scotland.

The present steering group should be widened to include other key providers within the Partnership and possibly some employers too. The function of the steering group is to direct and monitor the implementation plan.

It was suggested that a focus group should be set up which would include employers, providers, employer representatives, trades unions and employees. The purpose of the focus group would be to inform the work of the steering group.

A dissemination event might be organised prior to the formation of the focus group to get as many interested parties present as possible and to find out what part they could play in facilitating a focus group.

Training

With regard to training, four aspects were identified here:

- The need to provide general awareness training of workplace literacies for employers and supervisory staff
- Training in integrated literacies for supervisory staff, support staff and tutors
- Peer mentoring training for staff within companies & organisations
- Professional training for literacies tutors (either short training programmes or the SQA accredited PDA: Developing Literacies Learning Programmes in the Workplace).

Induction of tutors

Ideally, employers should be able to provide tutors with a company induction. However, there may be time and cost implications for companies in doing this.

8. Final Comments

The Learning for Work Steering Group met for the last time on 26th March 2008 and agreed that the following comments summarising some of the issues that arose during the implementation of the project should be included in this report. The outcome of the project has been very positive but a few issues arose during the project which the Steering Group believe are worthy of note for future discussion.

8.1 The benefits

The Project believes that it has produced some attractive and accessible materials that are new and innovative and will be very beneficial to the development of workplace literacies in Dumfries and Galloway. The Guide and the Packs were produced after detailed consultation with employers and practitioners. The materials have been endorsed by a wide cross section of employers in the region and reflect their own views on how workplace learning programmes should be developed based on negotiations around the individual needs of each company and workforce.

8.2 Local difficulties

During the lifetime of the project there were several staffing issues that made the implementation of the project difficult. These were:

- Failure to appoint a project coordinator
 Section 1 of this report details the difficulties encountered in trying to appoint a project coordinator and the subsequent staffing arrangements that were put in place to enable the project to continue.
- Loss of Steering Group Chair and Project Leader
 Further staffing difficulties were encountered when the Steering Group Chair left at the end of December 2007 to take up a secondment with HMIE. Then the Project Leader became ill just before the materials launch in January and remained off work through to the end of the project.
- Changes to the project plan
 The problems in recruiting a project coordinator meant that the project plan had to be redesigned so that the work could still be substantially completed by January 2008. The revised plan meant that although extensive consultation took place on the draft copies of the materials, they were printed and published before being tried out in reality with the pilot projects.

If there are any lessons to be learned from the pilots and through subsequent use of the materials then it is hoped that these can be addressed before any future reprints.

- Local geography

The geography of Dumfries and Galloway, the rural nature of the region and the predominance of small businesses made consultation with employers problematic. It was not possible to speak to a large number of companies and because of the travelling distances involved it was not practical to bring employers together. However, the 11 companies that took part were interviewed twice in depth.

8.3 Use of language and definitions

Definition of “workplace literacies”

All but two of the employers who assisted with the production of the materials had no previous experience with literacies work. Indeed the idea that their workforces might have literacies needs was initially something that the rest of the employers had not previously considered. This meant that the concept of adult literacy and numeracy had to be fully explained.

In doing this it seemed that there was no really accessible definition of adult literacy and numeracy and no readily available explanation of the term “workplace literacies”. The project team in consultation with the project steering group tried to write a definition of workplace literacies to make it easily understandable for employers with no previous experience.

Learning Connections advised that the definition of adult literacy and numeracy from the **Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Report (ALNIS)**² must be used. It was then found that the Learning Connections website has substituted “literacies” for “adult literacy and numeracy” in the ALNIS definition and had thereby created a definition for “literacies”.

There would seem to be a need for a workable definition of the term “literacies” or at least, if this has become the case, a recognition that in Scotland the term “literacies” is now used as a shorthand term for “adult literacy and numeracy” in the Scottish social practice context. There is also a need for a national definition for “workplace literacies”.



Use of language

The series of interviews with employers at the start of the project were used to try to get an insight into the way that employers work and think. Just as in literacies work one would always try to approach things from a learner centred perspective, the project team tried to adopt an employer centred viewpoint. Engagement with employers has been particularly hard in Dumfries and Galloway and it was felt that use of appropriate language in the project materials might prove helpful.

It was striking that employers and “literacies people” are used to working in different cultures. For example, when exploring how literacies programmes might be introduced into one factory with the Human Resources Manager it was suggested that someone from the Council or the College could come along and speak to the management team about a workplace programme. He said that this would be totally counter productive as this would put the managers right off.

They would speak different languages he said. It would be better if he mediated the message and transmitted it to the management team.

Bearing this in mind the first draft of the “How to do it Guide” was written in fairly direct language. It talked, for example, about “problems” and how these might be “tackled”. Learning Connections advised us to consider the language being used and asked for two specific words to be changed - they requested we say ‘issues’ rather than ‘problems’ and ‘addressed’ rather than ‘tackled’.

The project team made the changes as advised but felt that the revisions meant that the Guide lost its directness and impact for employers. The team believes that it is appropriate to use an approach and language that is tailored to the target audience in order to make a real impact.

8.4 Voluntary participation

The research done with employers indicated that, in principle, employers recognised that attendance on a literacies programme should be voluntary. However, a majority of employers indicated that there were rare and exceptional circumstances where they would wish to insist that attendance should be compulsory. These circumstances are given in the Employer/Provider

² Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland Report, Scottish Executive 2001

Agreement document which sets out the principles underpinning literacies programmes and is signed by the employer and the literacies programme provider.

The wording of this section in the agreement was negotiated with the employers who participated in the project. It was noted that employers felt that the employee's job might be in jeopardy if they were not able to achieve a required level of competence in the areas noted in the agreement document. However, employers agreed that the need to use compulsion would be very rare, but none the less they preferred this option to be available to them.

The exceptions to voluntary attendance detailed in the Employer/Provider Agreement are:

Where an inability to read, write or communicate effectively:

- Is deemed a health and safety issue or puts other workers in jeopardy
- Has a substantial affect on the employee's ability to do his/her job e.g. where he/she is unable to undertake essential process tasks such as taking correct temperature readings which could jeopardise product safety or measuring lengths of steel/wood accurately causing a serious loss of production.

Where there is an essential job related need for attendance in literacies programmes it is accepted that employers will wish employees to attend the programme until an agreed level of competence has been achieved. At this stage employees will be given a choice on whether or not they wish to continue with the programme.

Appendix A

Consultation with Employers

The initial consultation employers took place between June and September 2007. The discussion was based on the following themes:

- A. Literacies in the workplace
- B. The principles that should underpin a code of practice
- C. The employers' opinions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

A. Literacies in the workplace

Areas discussed:

- What the employers understood by adult literacy and numeracy?
- What literacies needs they felt their employees might have?
- The literacies demands of the workplace
- What would encourage them to take part in a workplace literacies programme?
- How a code of practice might make it easier for them to become involved?

What employers said

There was a range of views expressed by the employers. The following comments draw out areas of general consensus:

- At the outset of the discussion most employers did not feel that their employees had literacy or numeracy needs. Once they were given an explanation of how low literacies skills are likely to affect the employees' ability in the workplace all of the employers recognised that they did, in fact, have employees with literacies needs
- All of the jobs that employees were engaged in required a degree of literacy and numeracy. Employers had generally low expectations of the literacy/numeracy that employees can cope with and they were used to adapting work practices to take account of the skill levels of their employees
- There was no recognition of the Big Plus campaign and none of the 9 employers who had no previous involvement with workplace learning were aware of the help available or how to access it

- Most employers expressed an interest in workplace learning. Several small companies indicated that they would prefer literacies to be part of a whole company approach to staff development so that all employees could update their skills in literacy and numeracy and not just those employees with particular needs
- All employers said that guidelines to help them to introduce workplace learning would be useful. Some were strongly resistant to the idea of a code of practice and said that they would prefer a straightforward, easy to use guide. This was the genesis of the How to do it Guide for Employers.

B. The principles that should underpin a code of practice

Areas discussed

- Recruitment of employees on to the programme
- Who should participate?
- Attendance- voluntary or compulsory?
- Programme content
- Course materials
- Literacy/numeracy
- Confidentiality

What the employers said

Recruitment of employees on to the programme

There was very little consensus about the way to engage employees in literacies programmes. All recognised the sensitivities surrounding literacy and understood the need to proceed with care. A wide range of well thought through strategies were suggested by employers that fitted the particular needs of each workforce and company. These suggestions were later incorporated into the How to do it Guide.

Who should participate?

Smaller companies tended to want all employees to have the opportunity to attend a literacies programme whilst in larger companies there was a need for selection based on the requirements of the job. In one larger company, for example, lack of numeracy skills was a production issue which could potentially cost the company thousands of pounds in wasted materials.

Attendance- voluntary or compulsory?

Most employers recognised that it would be best if employees' attendance on a literacies programme is voluntary. But some felt that, where the programme is in work time and on work premises, then the company is entitled to make the course compulsory for certain staff. However, there was agreement that compulsion should be strictly limited to those employees whose performance on the job was adversely affected by their skills' level or where there might be a health and safety issue. Once these issues were addressed employers felt that further attendance should be voluntary.

Programme content

Opinions varied about the content of the course from one employer who felt that the employer should control the content of the programme based on the company's needs through to another who said they would trust the tutor to negotiate a programme based on the employees' needs. Most employers recognised that the programme would need to be negotiated around both the employees' and employers' needs. As one employer put it, "As long as the learning outcomes are achieved then the programme content is not an issue."

There was a general consensus that in the initial stages the learning should be linked to the literacies required for the job, starting with what is essential. After that the learning could be centred more and more around the needs of employees.

Course materials

Some employers said that they would be happy to provide course materials and all said that they would provide company paperwork for employees to work with. Some thought that they would like to design their own learning materials so that the company could keep them for future courses. Others said that they would expect the provider to contribute the course materials.

Literacy/numeracy

All agreed that the terms "literacy and numeracy" are problematic and off putting for participants. None of the employers wanted to see the words "literacy" or "numeracy" in the programme title but agreed they should be used in the description of the programme content. It was felt that the programme should be subject centred e.g. "report writing" or "core skills for the workplace" or "IT skills" were suggested.

Confidentiality

The employers' view on confidentiality varied according to the prevailing culture within the company. Small companies tended to say that confidentiality would not be an issue because they operate with open relationships between the workforce and managers. They felt that everybody should know about the programme but it should be sold in an open and non stigmatising way, for example, if it is publicised as an IT course primarily then confidentiality would not be an issue. Once the programme is running there would be no need to share information about the programme content.

In the larger organisations employers tended to see confidentiality as more of an issue and they said that they would work through the confidential employee development structure and annual reviews.

C. The employers' opinions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved

Areas discussed

- What did they think employers should contribute to a workplace literacies programme?
- What should providers of programmes be expected to provide?
- What should employees expect or be entitled to?

For the final part of the interview employers were asked to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the three parties involved: employers, providers and employees. By encouraging employers to look at the programme from the perspective of providers and employees it was possible to cross check on some of the responses given earlier in the interview. In some cases the employers changed their responses depending on the perspective they were asked to adopt.

- What did they think employers should contribute to a workplace literacies programme?

Employers were asked to comment on what they felt their role should be and what they should contribute to the learning programme.

Manager for the programme

All employers agreed that they would expect to provide a named manager to take responsibility for the programme.

Supportive environment

All agreed that there would be a need to create a supportive environment for the programme by ensuring that managers and supervisors were fully informed and positive about the programme. The ways to achieve this varied.

Access for the provider

Employers recognised that the provider would require access to the company and the workforce. To allow this to happen they would need to trust the provider and this would be dependent on their confidence that the provider would give a good service.

Most companies had space available for training purposes which could be used. One company indicated that it would have to use part of the canteen or part of a storage space.

- What should providers of programmes be expected to provide?

Next employers were asked to say what they felt learning programme providers should be responsible for contributing to the learning programme.

Information meeting for managers

Most employers thought that at the right stage it would be helpful if the provider gave an information meeting for managers. One manager felt this would be counter productive as the provider and the company managers would be on "different wave lengths" and not able to communicate.

Named contact

All said that the provider should provide a named contact person for the programme.

Employee interviews

Opinions were very mixed over whether or not it would be helpful for all employees to be interviewed prior to the start of the programme. One felt that this would be "very big brother-ish" and that it would be better if staff were identified through employee development interviews. Another said that the interviews should only follow after an employee had volunteered for the programme.

Initial assessment

Most agreed that some type of initial assessment of employees' literacies needs would be helpful and it was recognised that this would have to be done in a non- stigmatising way. Some companies indicated that they have job descriptions and job coaching sheets which could be used to find out the skills needed in the work place. Several companies said that they would prefer their own supervisors to be trained to undertake initial assessments.

The tutor

All employers agreed that the tutor should be properly qualified and one said that he would like to be involved in selecting the tutor. Others indicated that they would like to keep in regular touch with the tutor.

Tailored programme

Some employers felt that the needs of the employer should be paramount, others that the programme should be geared towards the employees' needs, but the majority felt that the programme should serve the needs of both employer and employee and that the tutor should be trusted to negotiate an appropriate programme.

Length of the programme

Most said that 1 or 2 hours a week would be the maximum amount of time that they could allow employees off from their jobs. Some companies indicated that the programme would need to fit into the slacker times of the year, for example, those involved in tourism said that courses would have to take place in the winter months.

One or two recognised that some employees might need more time than others and wondered how this might be accommodated. Two companies said that they would be prepared to give employees one hour of work time for course attendance and would expect them to give an hour of their own time to demonstrate real commitment.

There were a range of issues concerning shift work and how programmes could be timed to suit more than one shift.

Guidance, accreditation

All employers were prepared to allow employees to attend guidance interviews with the provider, both during and at the end of the programme. Some said that this could be done in work time. Two companies said that they would like their own supervisors to be involved in any guidance interviews.

All employers said that they would like their employees to get accreditation for the work they have done where possible and if accreditation is not possible they wanted the provider to provide an in-house certificate of achievement for those that complete the course.

Some, but not all, employers said that they would like a certificate for the company to mark participation in the programme.

- What should employees expect or be entitled to?

Finally employers were asked to consider the implementation from the perspective of the employees involved and to say what they thought employees should be entitled to expect. Their answers, in the main, confirm their previous responses.

Confidentiality

Most felt that employees should be entitled to confidentiality but this was not unconditional. Employers said that if the programme takes place in paid work time then they had the right to know:

- Whether or not employees are attending
- How they are progressing in general terms. One said that he would like a general progress report every 4 weeks.

All said that they would not expect to know about the detail of an individual's performance on the programme.

It was agreed that employees should be made aware of the level of confidentiality they are entitled to expect at the outset. All agreed that sensitive information should be restricted to one or two named individuals and in larger organisations it was felt that information should be restricted to line managers or Human Resources staff.

Attendance

All employers agreed that it would be best if attendance were voluntary. Some said that where work performance or health and safety might be an issue they would require attendance to be compulsory in the first instance until work issues were resolved. Thereafter it should be voluntary.

Initial Interview

Employers all agreed that employees should be entitled to an initial interview if they wanted it. There was variation on the stage at which this should be made available. In larger companies it was suggested that the initial interview should take place only for those employees who agree to take part in the course and should come after an initial selection and assessment process.

Paid time

All agreed that the programme should take place in paid work time. Two employers said that they would fund 50% of the employees' time on the programme and would like them to give the other 50% from their own time to indicate commitment.

Length of the course

Most agreed that the length of the programme and the number of hours per week would depend on the needs of the participants. It was recognised that some will learn more quickly than others. The maximum number of hours that could be made available each week was 2 hours, but companies in the leisure sector said that they could make more time available in the winter season. All organisations indicated that there were certain times of year when it would be easier for them to programme time off the job.

The programme

When thinking from the employees' perspective all employers agreed that the employees' personal needs should form an important part of the programme. Two thought that the demand of the workplace should come first, but others recognised that there would need to be a negotiated curriculum that included gains for the employers and the employee. A few employers said that they did not mind what their employees learned as they recognised that skills are transferable.

It was agreed that employees should be able to gain accreditation for what they learn if they wish and that every participant should receive a certificate detailing what they have achieved. Most employers indicated that they would be happy to have an award ceremony for participants at the end of the programme.

Guidance

All employers agreed that employees should be entitled to guidance interviews during and on completion of the programme if they wished. Some said that this would need to be in their own time. A few said that they would expect work supervisors to take part in these interviews others were happy for the provider to undertake the interviews.

Appendix B - Financial Report

Working For Life Project Expenditure 01/12/06 - 31/03/08	Staff Cost Development	Staff Cost Support	Tutor Costs	Employee Backfill	Advertising & Marketing	Travel	Stationery	Printing & Graphics	Materials	Other	Equipment	Total
01/12/06	Dec 06 - Mar 07	1863.00	7409.33		1037.98	258.60	59.20	1769.44			674.00	13071.55
01/04/07	Apr 07 - Jun 07	2839.94	4049.40		164.97	214.46			3280.00			10548.77
01/07/07	Jul 07 - Sep 07	9262.21	4661.48			160.10			170.32		150.14	14404.25
01/10/07	Oct 07 - Dec 07	11559.82	4009.48			288.30	190.84			136.37		16184.81
01/01/08	Jan 08 - Mar 08	15233.64	3172.40	5336.25	14540.90	437.32	824.95	11385.00	4685.96	6378.52		70670.20
TOTAL		40758.61	23302.09	5336.25	15743.85	1358.78	1074.99	13154.44	4685.96	9965.21	824.14	124879.58

	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Staff Cost	86174.48	78072.21	8102.27
Travel	3678.4	1358.78	2319.62
Materials	10450	14229.43	-3779.43
Other	33010	31219.16	1790.84
Total	133312.88	124879.58	8433.3

APPENDIX C

MATERIALS LAUNCH EVENT REPORT

Easterbrook Hall, Thursday 31st January 2008



1. The aims of the event

- To disseminate and evaluate the workplace literacies Guide and Packs
- To identify the opportunities and challenges in delivering workplace literacies in Dumfries and Galloway.

2. Attendance- Target Audience

The Learning for Work Steering Group decided to pitch the event at practitioners, because it was felt that they would then be able to disseminate the materials to employers across the region.

41 people attended the event including:

- 4 employers representing 3 companies
- Partner organisations representatives from Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway, learndirect, Dumfries and Galloway College and Dumfries and Galloway Council's Community Learning and Development Service.



3. The presentations

- Introduction: Tony Jackimciw, Principal of Dumfries and Galloway College. Tony stressed the importance of this initiative to engage employers in workplace learning, particularly as recent research shows that the skills of the Scottish workforce are below the European average and that the skills of the Dumfries and Galloway workforce are below the Scottish average
- Presentation: John MacMillan, Chair of the Dumfries and Galloway Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategic Partnership and Rona Gunnell, researcher. John and Rona gave the background to the Learning for Life project and the development of the materials
- Announcement of pilot projects: John MacMillan announced that the successful companies are Solway Steel, Creetown and Pinneys of Annan. The pilot projects are already under way. They will pilot the new materials and will last until Easter
- Employers' Presentations: Con Brennan of Solway Steel and Martin Tilstone of Pinneys. There were presentations from the two companies that are piloting the materials. Both indicated that they feel the new materials will be useful.

4. The workshops

The aims of the workshops were to:

- Feedback on the Guide
- Explore opportunities/challenges for the development of workplace literacies opportunities in Dumfries and Galloway.

Comments from the workshops – taken from the flip charts and the plenary session

4.1 Feedback on the Guide

- Good tool for marketing. Can be taken out to employers and employer organisations
- Will help to identify the needs of employees. Allows dialogue that will provide a focus for the learning programme
- Identifies employers' needs
- Will help to address communications issues between learners, tutors and providers
- Pack should be made available on-line in pdf and the "tools" in a printable version

- Loose leaf good for photocopying. (red type – becomes grey)
- Contact page clear. Free phone not always convenient for employer contact
- Professional, good quality
- Not too much jargon, user friendly/straight forward
- Flow charts helpful
- Coloured page edges make navigation easy. Easy to get to the bit you want
- Well set out – text/pictures. Easy on the eye
- Needs dividers
- Shiny paper – dyslexics?

4.2 Opportunities for the development of workplace literacies

For providers

- The materials will help Partners to engage organisations such as Chamber of Commerce, Job Centre Plus, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway, in the promotion of workplace learning.
- The materials provide a mechanism providers can use when talking to employers
- The materials give opportunities for tutors to update their skills.

For employers

- There is an opportunity to up-skill the workforce and improve business production
- The materials will help employers to recognise the financial incentives that accrue from taking part in workplace learning
- Key opportunity for Dumfries and Galloway to be a better place to live with more opportunities
- Dumfries and Galloway a place with good employers and good employment
- The Pack gives direct help with identifying literacies issues.

4.3 Challenges for the development of workplace literacies

For providers

- Getting the pack out there and on an employer's desk
- Finding the relevant contact in a company and meeting with them
- Selling the benefits to employers and employees
- Availability of tutors and training for tutors
- The cost
- Confidentiality.

For employers

- Funding for courses
- Selling the idea to employees
- Finding the right provider
- Continuity with shift work
- Venues
- Materials.

5. Closing remarks

Jack Groom Chair of Nithsdale Area Committee and Provost of Dumfries closed the event by thanking all concerned and stressing the importance of workplace learning for Dumfries and Galloway.

6. Evaluation of the event

25 participants completed evaluation forms.

The responses

6.1 Did the event achieve its aims?

1. To disseminate and evaluate the workplace literacies Guide and Packs
2. To identify the opportunities and challenges in delivering workplace literacies in Dumfries and Galloway.

24 out of 25 participants said it did. (One participant said that it achieved aim 2, but not aim 1.)

The results (where 1 = aims achieved not at all and 5 = aims achieved totally.)

14 participants - scored 4

10 participants - scored 5

1 participant gave score 2 for event aim 1 and a score 4 for event aim 2

6.2 Comments on the scores given

20 comments in total

14 comments were entirely positive.

5 said they would have liked more time to study the materials either before the event or on the day.

One commented that more delegates were needed

6.3 The most successful aspects of the day

Overwhelmingly the participants said that they valued the contributions of the two employers. (mentioned by 19 delegates)

Other comments cited the opportunity to look through the pack, networking and the workshop sessions.

6.4 The least useful aspects of the day

There were 7 negative comments as follows

- 3 - not enough time to look at the packs (one thought this should be done after the pilots)
- 1 - would have liked more time to ask questions
- 2 - thought the coffee break too long
- 1 - said "lack of time"

6.5 Suggestions for future events to promote workplace literacies

21 comments made including:

Make a video of the presentations by Solway Steel and Pinneys

Hold similar events across the region – road show

Hold an update event with feedback from employers engaged in the programme

Maintain input from employers to sell the benefits and encourage input from employees/learners and providers

More small business representatives if possible

6.6 What have you gained from attending this event?

Typical comments included:

Lots of ideas for workplace literacies opportunities in my area

More enthusiasm and stimulation to really study the pack and be more proactive in promoting workplace literacies programmes

A very professional and useful pack

Insight into local industries

Knowledge of the need for ALN in the workplace

A broad understanding of the new Guide and Pack

An understanding of the issues for employers and how to use the Pack

An opportunity to meet employers/providers and share issues

Networking opportunity

6.7 Would you be interested in a regular employer/provider network/forum?

Yes – 20, No – 2, Neither – 2.



7. Possible issues for consideration by the ALN Strategic Partnership

- Funding for workplace learning
- Web based materials
- Engaging with employers
- The promotion of the new materials
- Training for tutors
- Evaluation of the pilots.

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECTS

The purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation was focussed on the usefulness or otherwise of the Learning for Work Project materials: the Workplace Literacies Guide and the Packs for Employers and Providers. This will be evidenced by:

- The extent to which employers new to workplace literacies are encouraged to take part in programmes
- Whether or not employers and practitioners say that the materials make it easier for them to engage in and develop workplace literacies programmes
- Good practice in workplace literacies in Dumfries and Galloway.

It is recognised that the new materials alone are not the only factor which influences the above and that factors such as practitioners' training and experience are likely to have a significant effect.

Validity of the pilots

It should be noted that the two companies taking part in the pilots had been involved in the development of the materials and had participated in the consultation on the draft materials and this might affect the validity of the results from the pilots.

Evaluation methods

- Use of the assessment tools contained within the Packs
- End of programme questionnaire about the Guide and the Packs completed by the employer and the provider
- Observation of the groups of learners.

Results of the evaluation

1. Solway Steel

Introduction

The pilot at Solway Steel began in early January 2008 as it was felt that there was an imperative to ensure the programme finished before the March deadline for the completion of the Learning for Work Project. The learning programme was, therefore, underway before the launch of the project materials which took place the end of January. This means that the project Guide and Packs were not used at the outset of the pilot

programme as intended, but came into use towards the end of the programme and, therefore, some of the earlier Sections of the Guide and the Pack were not fully piloted.

a) Use of the tools in the Packs

There are 23 tools in the Providers' Pack and the provider said that they used 17 of them during the programme. The 6 that were not used are:

- The funding application form because this was a pilot project
- Guide to accessing library resources
- Workplace learning resources as the tutor was able to use examples directly from the workplace
- Group learning plan – used a plan on a different format
- Learning styles questionnaire
- Learning plan review – used providers own review form which is similar.

Comments on the evaluation form indicated that although these tools were not used in this instance that the provider would expect to use them in future projects.

Workplace learning evaluation form

This form was used by a manager and a supervisor on completion of the programme and it showed that both had used the form to **highlight** the positive benefits that the programme has had on the company and on the performance of the employees.

b) End of programme questionnaire about the Guide and the Packs completed by the employer and the provider

The responses to the evaluation questionnaire are shown on Table 1.

c) Observation of the groups of learners

The extent to which the materials have had a positive impact on observed practice are difficult to determine for this pilot because it started prior to the materials becoming available.

The initial induction process for participants included an initial assessment of each individual's learning needs and individual learning plans were begun. Although employees had expressed a desire to take part in a learning programme when they had seen the migrant workers benefiting from English language programmes it was not entirely clear that all participants had volunteered.

The Employer/Provider Agreement document was not available at the start of the programme and it was completed retrospectively. The use of this document would have enabled the provider and employer to recognise the need for participants to be volunteers except in certain specified circumstances which did not apply in this case.

Two groups of learners were observed towards the end of their learning programme by which time the groups had progressed from basic numeracy, including fractions and decimals towards using and understanding the basic trigonometry needed in their work as welders. Basic trigonometry appears at SCQF level 4 and is an everyday work skill for these welders.

It was not apparent whether the individual learning plans started at the outset had been fully integrated into a group learning plan. Again the provider and tutor started this process in advance of the materials becoming available.

2. Pinneys of Scotland.

Introduction

The pilot project at Pinneys started in March 2008 and was completed in March 2009.

The project took much longer than anticipated due to several factors. To establish a new project there were a number of stages to be undertaken and some of the stages took time to complete. The steps included: obtaining approval at company board level, identifying one department within the company to take part in the project, devising an assessment test, translating the test into Polish, gaining Union approval for the test and project, administering the assessment tests, sending out individual letters to staff giving their test results and inviting them to one to one interviews, interviewing prospective candidates, organising tutorials, negotiating the curriculum and finally evaluating the project.

The 20 minute assessment test was developed by the Company in conjunction with a lecturer from Dumfries and Galloway College. It was based on everyday work activities and was predominantly based on numeracy tasks. For example one question was "If poached salmon takes 75 minutes to cook and was put in the cooker at 15.15 hours what time will it be ready".

Three of the Unite Union's Shop Stewards agreed to sit the assessment test as a trial. They all scored above 60%. The test was then taken by employees in one department of the company and included UK and Polish workers. It was translated into Polish to ensure that literacies needs, rather than English Language needs, were identified. 32 workers took the test including 13 UK, 18 Polish and 1 Lithuanian. Only 5 workers scored more than 65%, with the UK workers scoring better than the non UK. The UK workers scored on average 57%, the non UK averaged 41% and the combined average was 48%.

In August 2008 all staff that scored below 60% were sent individual letters to their home addresses inviting them to attend one to one interviews. By the end of the process only two employees decided to take up the offer to attend tutorials and these were both UK employees. A lecturer from Dumfries and Galloway College then negotiated a course with the participants. The course took ten weeks and was eventually completed in February 2009.

Throughout the process confidentiality was maintained.

During the lifetime of the project the Company went through a period of uncertainty and was eventually taken over by another company. This impacted on the timescale of the project.

a) Use of the tools in the Packs

The college used only 7 of the 23 tools in the Providers' Pack. The College, however, has its own equivalents to many of the tools such as the end of course certificates and many of the adult literacies forms are already incorporated into the College's own learning plans.

Workplace Learning Evaluation Form

This form was completed by a Personnel Manager at the end of the programme. He indicated that the programme had a positive impact on the company by producing a better, more reliable and more trustworthy workforce. The positive impacts were improved quality of work, improved loyalty and attitude, staff more likely to be promoted, to make fewer errors, to feel valued, to take more responsibility, to communicate better with the team, to be more adaptable, to take up training opportunities, to gain promotion and to be better motivated.

The Personnel Manager involved in the project gave the Company Board a PowerPoint presentation about the project on completion. The Company has seen the potential benefits of workplace literacies provision and is now enthusiastic about rolling a programme out with more employees. In future the company will redesign the assessment procedures and will use the two graduates from the first course to promote the benefits of the programme to other employees.

b) End of programme questionnaire about the Guide and the Packs completed by the employer and the provider.

The responses to the evaluation questionnaire are shown on Table 1.

c) The Learner’s perspective

It was only possible to speak to one of the learners. He said that he had really enjoyed the programme. He was very disappointed with his initial assessment test result and was keen to upgrade his skills. He spoke highly of working with the College lecturer and felt that he had learned a great deal that will help him in his work and every day life.

Evaluation of the Workplace Literacies How to do it Guide, Employers’ Pack and Providers Pack

RESPONSES

Question	Company - Solway Steel	Company - Pinneys	Provider - CLDS	Provider - D&G College
The Guide 1= not useful 5 = very useful	5 Colour, layout and graphics excellent.	4 Guide was extremely useful and we attempted to stick closely to it as much as possible.	3 – already experienced but some useful sections for new employers/ providers	5 - It gave the provider and the workplace a common frame of reference and a starting place to have a conversation.
Most useful Steps	1,5,7,8,9	1	1,4,6 – advice on approaches to managers especially useful - plus defining objectives and recruiting employees	1 - I think that identifying the needs of the learners is really important. It doesn’t matter how well put together the programme is, if it doesn’t take the needs of the learner into consideration then it will not be any good.
Least useful Steps	-	6	2 - geared to employers	2 - As a provider this was the least relevant to me but of course it is very important for employers.

Question	Company - Solway Steel	Company - Pinneys	Provider - CLDS	Provider - D&G College
Employers' Pack 1= not useful 5 = very useful	5 - Layout and colour combinations good. Flow charts and tick boxes good	4 Comprehensive detail in most sections, however, Section 6, "Recruiting individuals onto the programme" was lacking on "How to do it guide" best practice.	5 - Well laid out and colour coded sections make it easy to identify sections	5 - The pack meant that the employer had started to think about what they wanted/ needed before they met me. It saved a lot of time. I also think that it encouraged Pinneys to want to customise things themselves.
Most useful Sections	2,3,4,5	9	2,7 & 9 - Local contacts excellent. Employer/Provider Agreement essential. Review checklist useful	3,4 - Pinneys were keen to be an active participant in the planning process and indeed they at times took the lead in planning. This was because I think the plan had really helped them see what they needed.
Least useful Sections	-	6	3 - May be useful in other situations	- I can't pick anything out as something that wasn't really needed.
Providers' Pack 1= not useful 5 = very useful	N/A	N/A	4 - Due to timescales for the pilot many arrangements in place before the Pack was launched. Therefore some of the tools not used.	5 - It was good that it helped keep the focus of the project.
Most useful Sections	N/A	N/A	1,6,8 - Information on further funding essential	2,7 - 2 was useful to find out about Pinneys (even though I had worked there some things had changed). 7 - Planning tools are always useful!
Least useful Sections	N/A	N/A	7 - Prefer our own service ILP to the one in the pack	1 - This was probably because I am aware of the resources available to me.

Question	Company - Solway Steel	Company - Pinneys	Provider - CLDS	Provider - D&G College
Literacies Programme For employees 1= not effective 5 = very effective	5 - Team building within the group. Sense of achievement on completion	4 Two employees attended the programme. One candidate was very satisfied with results.	N/A	N/A
For business 1= not valuable 5= very valuable	5 - More confident and positive workforce	5 Well written with good test examples.	N/A	N/A
Engaging other employers	Board of Directors have followed progress and are encouraging sister companies to pursue workplace literacies.	I think so!. Having the Guide was beneficial but where I felt best value was added was the employee-tutor relationship. I felt this was the key to success.	N/A	N/A
The future	Continued funding for the project needed to include refresher sessions.	Considering it was a pilot scheme it would make sense to evaluate the programme and highlight positive/negative recommendations for the future	N/A	N/A