



Devon Adult Learning Disability Employment Pathway

First Steps Project 2009-10

FINAL REPORT JULY 2010

PROJECT AIMS

1. This project aimed to co-ordinate, align and extend the curriculum offer for part time adult learners with LDD across three local authority areas, Plymouth, Torbay and Devon.
2. The project also aimed to identify gaps in provision and develop and pilot new provision which leads onto work preparation/ employment training.
3. The project sought to strengthen progression links from PCDL and First Steps provision to Foundation Learning. Full qualifications are often not suitable for learners with learning disabilities who are not engaged in work-related plans, as they are too long: there is a need for new bite-sized "First Steps" which can bridge the gap to work-related provision.

PROJECT PLAN

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Output / Evidence</i>	<i>Date completed</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Convene Steering Group, produce Work Plan and support documents	Minutes, Work Plan, Submission letter, ILP	October	Delayed as funding only notified in Sept
Mapping of provision	Full report (table)	November	Completed
Gap analysis	Report of analysis & discussions	December	Completed
Course plans & curriculum development	Schemes of work, timetables	December - January	These were developed over a longer period, depending on course dates
80 Applications for Learning Accounts	Applications	March	Applications arrived at different times; far fewer were received as most providers did not charge fees

Course delivery	Applications & enrolment data, ILPs	March	8 out of 10 courses finally ran
Final report	Report	July	

DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE ITS AIMS?

1. For the first time, as a result of the Mapping and Gap analysis, the range of learning opportunities has been co-ordinated and presented for all to see. This is currently up to date and takes account of the latest curriculum and funding changes. This has been circulated via professional groups, carers networks, and relevant websites. All three local authorities have worked together with the Project Manager to achieve this.

2. A wide range of gaps were identified, and short courses developed to meet them. These were presented in flyers as attached.

3. All of these courses offer opportunities for progression to further learning within Foundation Learning, or directly on to Jobcentre Plus provision. These courses were based on 20-30 hour units available (2-3 credits) mapped against qualifications on the QCF.

Some courses ran very successfully and the providers would look to do more of them. The provider has developed expertise in running the course and the publicity has raised expectations among the client group. We are looking at how we might fund these in future, as the Skills Funding Agency model still does not support individual units in this way.

Despite offering access to Individual Learner Budgets there was little direct demand for these. The project funded the courses themselves and providers were reluctant to take on the administrative requirements of charging fees and then reclaiming them from the learner accounts.

We have already piloted a "Devon Learning Account" which enables learners to access courses where a fee has to be paid. This was through the previous, smaller project for Adult Education which was also funded by the LSC, and has been successful in showing how this could work for those courses where they were run in the voluntary sector and in Adult and Community Learning. Success depended very much on the commitment of individuals in the provider organisations.

The figures for participation and progression are set out below.

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Title of course</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Capacity built?</i>
Pluss	Voluntary	NPTC Personal & Social Development – Skills for Working Life E2	2	Yes – staff learned how to deliver to current clients
ROC	Voluntary	NPTC Entry 2; Unit 201, Workplace safety and emergency procedures; Unit 204, credit value 2, Improve personal manner	201=1 204=2	Yes – staff learned how to deliver new provision to current clients

		and conduct.		
ROC	Voluntary	NPTC Entry 2; Unit 201, Workplace safety and emergency procedures; Unit 204, Improve personal manner and conduct.	201=1 204=2	Yes – staff learned how to adapt to different clients
Exeter College	FE	C&G Personal & Social Dev't - E2 Working as part of a group	2	Yes – staff learned how to deliver
Devon ACL	ACL	C&G ICT	2	Postponed due to staff problems
City College, Plymouth	FE	NOCN Award Enabling Progression ICT E3 – individual unit	3	Yes – staff learned how to manage one-off enrolments as part of unit delivery
Petroc	FE	NOCN Entry 3 Developing Skills for Gaining Employment (2 units)	3	Course postponed
Pluss	Voluntary	NPTC Personal & Social Development – Skills for Working Life E2	2	Yes – staff learned how to deliver to new clients
ROC	Voluntary	NPTC Entry 2; Unit 201, Workplace safety and emergency procedures; Unit 204, Improve personal manner and conduct.	201=1 204=2	Yes – staff learned how to adapt to different clients & plan progression
Bicton College	FE – Land based	C&G Introductions to Horticulture, Animal care, Agriculture	2 each	Courses did not run – no learners willing to make the trip
Plymouth ACL	ACL	NOCN Entry 3, Introduction to Customer Service Skills	2	PACL worked with Remploy to deliver the course, excellent experience and they would like to do more

First Steps Project Participation

Number of learners – 61

This is lower than the target number, as each course was not able to recruit as many learners as they had hoped. Please see Conclusions below.

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>25 or under</i>	<i>Over 25</i>
No	33	28	15	46
Percentage	54%	46%	22%	78%

Of the responses received, learners gave their intended progression destinations as:

Work experience / work	Further training in organisation	Further training elsewhere	Volunteering	Recreational learning	Not known
76%	23%	0%	1%	0%	0%

One learner has gained so much in confidence that she now has a job as a part time carer. Another learner has secured full time employment with a cleaning company. Given the client group these are remarkable achievements in such a short time.

Devon Learning Account Participation

Number of learners – 61

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>25 or under</i>	<i>Over 25</i>
No	30	31	11	50
Percentage	49%	51%	18%	82%

Of the responses received, learners gave their intended progression destinations as:

Work experience/work	Further training in organisation	Further training elsewhere	Volunteering	Recreational learning	Not known
10%	54%	5%	0%	5%	26%

Learner comments include:

D B - Loves attending every Friday - each week he arrives from home with his pencil case to St. George and comments on going to college. He enjoys the writing, listening to Mel and the course paperwork.

M R - Enjoys the course. He would not attend if he did not enjoy it as he is very particular where he goes. We get little feedback from him but he does benefit and certainly listens to instruction.

P T - Pat told me that she enjoys the new things she learns about - especially about buses and bus passes. She wants to carry on and have the opportunity of working with Mel and Dennis and the worksheets.

GH - He loved the course, used his mind and formed friendships bringing him out of isolation. Without funding he would not have been able to do this course.

NJ - Learned to cook, learnt English and maths and interacted with others. Without funding she would not have been able to do this course.

KL & PD - Learnt general living skills, safety, paying for things and it has improved her confidence. Without funding would not have attended.

DJ - The course is meeting her needs, it is very beneficial, she is making things to sell to family and friends. Funding is needed to keep courses going and provide places for disabled adults otherwise they will close.

DC – Would like to do more training – “I want to get a job”

BS – “I’ve learnt more than I have in a long time”

The Pluss co-ordinator has sent us the following comment:

“I have just spoken to staff at Torquay CRC [from where the learners were recruited] and they and the learners are so excited about this one unit of learning they have done that the outcome for all of them (funding permitting) will be to do some further learning hopefully with Pluss. This will be to build on the 2 credit qualification they already have and work towards an Award

Although they may like a work placement in the future – who will support/fund this as for some people with learning disabilities the outcome of PAID work is unlikely either because of their disability (e.g. epilepsy) or their cognitive abilities or because of the benefit trap. Lots of work needed in this area I think.”

Conclusions, Recommendations and Exit Strategy

1. Voluntary sector organisations found it easier to run a First Steps work-related module than colleges did, and were keener to do so. They were already in touch with potential learners and were able to recruit them easier. Turning college provision around to accommodate this kind of provision was more difficult, though the personal commitment of individuals in Exeter and City Colleges, and in Plymouth ACL, made it possible: they now wish to run further courses like this.
2. Even with the voluntary sector groups, it was difficult to put together a viable group of learners for any particular subject, because of the travelling distances involved. This was true of both the First Steps and the recreational provision. We had enquiries for the Bicton College courses, but learners (or their parents / carers) were not willing to travel the distances required. Potential learners are scattered over a huge geographical area, and the courses which did run are those with a cross-curricular theme, that would appeal to almost everyone. Even in these cases, we were not able to get group sizes as large as we anticipated.
3. The feedback from teachers, learners and their parents was very positive. The experience on First Steps courses has given them the majority the confidence, the contacts and the information they need to take further steps in the direction of work or work-related learning. We will be looking for more ways of supporting this provision as a way of encouraging people into Foundation Learning pathways, and into thinking seriously about employment.

4. The experience of the Learning Account project has been similar – it has given people confidence and motivation, often a new interest in life. The fact that most would like to do further learning, and some would like to do work experience, shows there is potential overlap in the types of provision offered. Short courses seem an ideal way to help people try things out, learn about further opportunities, and progress to what they want to do and be as adults.
5. The project has established a partnership framework for provision for adults with learning disabilities. There is now a high quality of information that is shared and able to be updated. There have been difficulties along the way, but ACL, FE and voluntary organisations are learning how to work together for the benefit of learners. This is across the three local authorities: Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
6. We will be progressing opportunities further under our new Learn Devon project, which will fund accredited units for a wide range of client groups, and support these with Skills Accounts. This will build on the valuable experience of “First Steps”.

John Willis, Project Manager
July 2010