

Newcastle City Learning

Employer Engagement Strategy

2006 - 2009

Vision

To deliver outstanding workplace training provision to support the transformation of the workforce of the city and the region.

The Importance of the Strategy

This strategy will support two related and key issues; firstly Newcastle upon Tyne fails to meet government floor targets for worklessness; secondly the Learning and Skills Council stated priorities include developing skills for employability, particularly at level 2. Both aspects of this strategy will support the economic development of the City.

For individuals the acquisition of skills under this strategy will support them in obtaining, retaining or gaining alternative employment and hence improve their personal and family economic circumstances.

The diversification of the curriculum will help to maintain the stability of the service and help it to grow and develop in the forthcoming period. This will help to underpin and support community provision at a time when funding is increasingly difficult. Community provision will also act as a catalyst and first steps opportunity for learners who may later progress into the remit of this strategy.

For tutors the development of the employability curriculum will enable a broadening of the skills base and provide opportunities for professional development and wider experience in teaching, training and learning.

Position Statement

At present the service does not have any coherent approach to the delivery of employer based provision. EQ8, the pre-cursor to Train to Gain, was managed by the Training and Development team with the Skills for Life team delivering the underpinning literacy and numeracy skills required to support learner achievement. EQ8 funding has now finished and has been superseded. For provision outside EQ8 individual centres have made their own arrangements with employers, resulting in inconsistent practice across the service.

The service has been successful in its bid for Train to Gain funding for approximately 250 NVQs and £250,000 per year and has ring-fenced a further £250,000 mainstream FE funding for the delivery of another 250 full NVQs although these will not necessarily be first full level 2 qualifications for learners.

There is little experience of the delivery of NVQs within the Further Education section of the service. A number of the staff recently appointed to the service have extensive knowledge and experience of NVQ delivery. Although there is a pool of assessors available within some Directorates of the City Council there are gaps but there is no coherent understanding of the knowledge and expertise available. There is no consistent practice in assessment across the Directorates and no common reporting, quality assurance, professional development or management functions.

Recently the City Council's Training and Development team has established a cross-directorate Workforce Learning and Development group and a Workforce Learning and Development Board. The Workforce Learning and Development Group is managing a project to propose a Workforce Learning and Development Plan for the whole City Council to the Workforce Learning and Development Board. The Workforce Learning and Development Plan has eight streams: Skills for Life; Young People/ Community Learning; Union Learning Representatives; Vocational and Professional Training ; Skills Audit and Pathway; Equalities and Diversity; Leadership; and Corporate Programmes. This plan is to be agreed by early 2007.

Newcastle City Council currently has within its funding agreement with the Learning and Skills Council a small number of modern apprenticeships. These are managed by Neighbourhood Services. Apprenticeships are predominantly for young people aged 16-19 but can go up to the age of 24. An apprenticeship provides for a young person an agreed framework of qualifications which includes key skills, NVQ and technical certificates. Young people undertaking an apprenticeship have employed status. The Learning and Skills Council is willing to consider proposals for an expansion of this provision if it forms part of a strategic approach to the employment and development of young people within the City Council. This is being addressed through the Workforce Learning and Development Plan.

Both within the City Council and in the wider business community workforce development is a very competitive market to which Newcastle City Learning is a newcomer. For those not currently in the workforce the development of the First Steps Learning Strategy will be particularly important in supporting learners to develop the baseline skills they will need to identify appropriate areas of work. This is also underpinned and supported by the Skills for Life Strategy.

Strengths

- The effective development and delivery of Skills for Life to support worker productivity and the achievement of qualifications which contribute towards the national targets
- Good Work-based learning for young people within the City Council
- An effective team of Union Learning Representatives to support workers into and through learning within the City Council
- Effective use of external partners for the delivery of full level 2 qualifications in the Care sector
- A substantial range of work-place assessors across the City Council

Weaknesses

- Inadequate management of workplace learning and training for adults
- Insufficient knowledge, experience and practice of NVQs within Newcastle City Learning
- No strategy for the development of opportunities with employers outside the City Council

How will we know we have been successful?

- 1 Establish an effective high quality workforce learning programme by January 2007
- 2 The successful delivery of 500 NVQs; with a minimum of 300 first full level 2s, 20 full level 1 NVQs and 50 level 3 NVQs by July 2007
- 3 To ensure all learners receive appropriate Skills for Life support and achieve the national tests where possible

Model of Delivery

The model of delivery for this provision for adults will be:

- The Employability Coordinator will ensure that the employer understands the benefits of investing in the workforce and achieving NVQs
- Employed learners will be identified by the employer. Initially all learners will be employees of Newcastle City Council, with other employers being targeted once the model is successfully established and embedded
- Information, Advice and Guidance will be provided for all learners through Newcastle City Learning once the Matrix standard has been achieved or through New Pathways until that time

- Learners not currently in employment are likely to be identified either through general marketing activity or through campaigns to develop a workforce for an employer, possibly moving into the City
- Learners will be enrolled onto our system
- The achievement of the qualification will be through the Assess, Train, Assess model
- Where necessary workshops will be arranged for candidates and delivered to cover gaps in knowledge
- An assessor requires current occupational competence and needs to be able to carry out assessments on a regular and ongoing basis as the opportunity arises within the normal pattern of work. Therefore, where possible the assessor will be the first line manager of the candidate
- Newcastle City Learning will fund and deliver the training of workplace assessors
- Newcastle City Learning will pay for the time of assessors and verifiers to carry out the role at an agreed rate and for an agreed amount of time (model to be determined)
- Internal verification will be carried out throughout the programme
- Where appropriate lettings charges will be paid by the service for the use of facilities for the delivery of workshops
- Newcastle City Learning will register learners for their qualification and will, where funded, pay for the cost of accreditation
- Newcastle City Learning will quality assure the delivery of the provision through observation of teaching, learning and assessment, learner satisfaction surveys, monitoring of outcomes and other appropriate means
- Where appropriate learners will be assessed for literacy, language and numeracy needs and tailored supporting skills development will be provided, leading to the achievement of national tests wherever possible. Where appropriate the development of Skills for Life will be embedded within the programme of learning

Please see flowchart to illustrate the planned process in Appendix A

Partners Involved

- Learning and Skills Council
- All City Council directorates
- Workforce Learning and Development Group
- Newcastle City Learning external partners - Interactive Development Ltd, Learning First Ltd, Mobile Care Qualifications Ltd

Priorities for Delivering the Plan

	Priority	Outcome(s) contributed to	Related City Strategies	Related NCL Strategies	NCL values applied
1	Develop a delivery plan for Train to Gain and mainstream FE funding which will support the delivery of the service targets for full level 2, full level 3 and for Skills for Life	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan • Children and Young People's Plan • Regeneration Strategy • LSC Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning • Learner Support • Curriculum • Area of Learning Plans • Skills for Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning are our primary focus in all we do • We value the individual whoever they may be • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Striving for excellence • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action

2	Develop a plan for the expansion of work-based learning for young people across the City Council and secure funding through the LSC	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan • Children and Young People's Plan • Regeneration Strategy • LSC Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Curriculum • Area of Learning Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning are our primary focus in all we do • We value the individual whoever they may be • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Striving for excellence • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action
3	Raise the aspirations of the workforce	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan • Children and Young People's Plan • Regeneration Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning • Learner Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value the individual whoever they may be • Striving for excellence • Putting the ethos and the plans into action

4	Ensure all learners are safe	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value the individual whoever they may be • Striving for excellence
5	Ensure all target staff groups, both within the City Council and in external employers, have fair access to learning opportunities	1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan • Equality and Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity • Resources • Skills for Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value the individual whoever they may be • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Striving for excellence • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action

6	Establish a model for the recruitment, training, updating and funding of workplace trainers, assessors and verifiers	1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning • Quality Improvement • Curriculum • Area of Learning Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning are our primary focus in all we do • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Striving for excellence • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action
7	Establish links with the City Council's regeneration strategy	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Areas of Learning Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action

8	Improve employment opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration Strategy • Children and Young People's Plan • LSC Annual Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning • Quality Improvement • Learner Support • LLDD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Learning are our primary focus in all we do • We value the individual whoever they may be • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Striving for excellence • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action
9	Ensure there are clear protocols and communication links for NCL workforce development across the authority	1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and delivery of a diversity of learning opportunities • Working together and with others • Putting the ethos and the plans into action
10	Develop a marketing plan for workforce development	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Learning and Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting the ethos and the plans into action

Equalities implications

- Assessment of Skills for Life need is essential to enable all learners to maximise their potential for success
- It is important to ensure that all managers allow fair consideration of all relevant staff groups when determining who should access training opportunities, ie no employee should be excluded from training on the basis of their age, gender, race or sexual orientation

Health and Safety Implications

- All assessors must ensure that risk assessments have been carried out and acted upon appropriately for all assessment situations
- All trainers and assessors need a clear understanding of the health and safety requirements for the vocational area
- All staff must comply with Newcastle City Council's health and safety policy and procedure

Action Plan

	Priority	Milestones	Timescale for Milestones	Impact	Responsibility	Completion Date	Cost
1	Develop a delivery plan for Train to Gain and mainstream FE funding which will support the delivery of the service targets for full level 2, full level 3 and for Skills for Life	Appoint a coordinator	September 06	500 NVQS including at least 300 first full level 2s, 20 full level 1s, 50 full level 3s by July 2007	Head of Adult Learning	November 06	Training Trainers, assessors and verifiers - all within Train to Gain contract costs
Establish training needs through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Directorate representatives • Employer contacts • Meetings with External Partners 		September 06 and ongoing	Employability Coordinator				
Establish clear recruitment targets		November 06 and ongoing September 06 and ongoing	Curriculum and Quality Manager				

	Agree a protocol for the initial assessment of learners in partnership with the Skills for Life Team including funding of initial assessment	September 06		Skills for Life Adviser		
	Establish guidelines resource allocation, eg assessors, verifiers, workshops per candidate and per cohort	October 06		Curriculum and Quality Manager		
	Ensure centre approval for all programmes planned	Nov 06		Employability Coordinator		

	Fully cost delivery plan in partnership with Business Development Team	Oct 06		Employability Coordinator		
	Agree a pay structure, time allocation and processes for assessors and verifiers	October 06		Head of Adult Learning		
	Sign off delivery plan costings	October 06		Business Development Manager		
	Develop an outline exit strategy for 2 years time	January 07		Employability Coordinator		

2	Develop a plan for the expansion of work-based learning for young people across the City Council and secure funding through the LSC	Establish need through meetings with Workforce Learning and Development Group	December 06	Funding for plan agreed	Employability Coordinator	August 07	To be confirmed but in development stage none other than staff time
		Ensure appropriate staff across directorates understand the responsibilities in relation to work-based learning in terms of cost, support, employment, training, assessment	December 06		Employability coordinator		

		Develop a costed action plan and proposal for LSC Tyne and Wear in partnership with the Training and Development Team	January 07		Employability Coordinator		
		Negotiate contract with LSC Tyne and Wear	February 07		Head of Adult Learning		
		Deliver plan	Post August 2007		Employability Coordinator		

3	Raise the aspirations of the workforce	Plan content of roadshows with Skills for Life team and appropriate assessors and trainers	October 06	50% of learners undertaking employer based NVQs demonstrate raised aspirations at the end of the course by July 2007, rising to 60% in July 2008 and 70% in July 2009	Employability Coordinator	July 2008	Staff time
		Ensure all learners attend the roadshows	October 2006 and ongoing				
		Quality Improvement Coordinator to plan questionnaire to measure changes in aspirations	November 2006 and ongoing				
		Learners undertake pre- and post-training questionnaire on attitudes to learning and aspirations	November 2006 and ongoing				

4	Ensure all learners are safe	Draw up service related addendum to Newcastle City Council's Health and Safety policy which is curriculum specific	October 2006	No reportable accidents take place during assessments	Employability Coordinator	July 2007 and ongoing	Staff time
		Brief all trainers, assessors and verifiers on Health and Safety and NCC's policy and procedures and the service specific addendum	December 2006				

		Ensure Health and Safety is a key area of discussion with all managers and learners	October 2006 and ongoing				
5	Ensure all target staff groups, both within the City Council and in external employers, have fair access to learning opportunities	Ensure equalities is a key element in all discussions with employers and managers	October 2006		Employability Coordinator	July 2007	Staff time
		Monitor the learner profile and action plan accordingly	October 2006 and ongoing				
6	Establish a model for the recruitment, training, updating and funding of workplace trainers, assessors and verifiers	Establish the range and nature of trainers, assessors and verifiers within the service and the authority	September 2006	All EV reports have no more than 2 actions to be undertaken by July 2007	Employability Coordinator	September 2007 and ongoing	Staff time

		Identify gaps in range of trainers, assessors and verifiers	September 2006				
		Develop training plan for all staff with the Quality Improvement Coordinator	September 2006				
		Curriculum Coordinators to recruit assessors and verifiers	October 2006 and ongoing				
		Document the Assess, Train, Assess delivery model	October 2006				
		Ensure all quality improvement procedures are implemented	October 2006 and ongoing				

		Best practice in the use of ILPs with learners documented	October 2006				
		Train all training staff in the effective development, monitoring and updating of ILPs with learners	November 2006				
		Establish the use of E-portfolios via the VLE (action needs further development)	December 2006				
7	Establish links with Newcastle City Council's regeneration strategy	Meet with Alison Sanderson	October 2006		Employability Coordinator	July 2007	Staff time initially
		Meet with Seth Pearson	October 2006				
		Meet with George Kelly	October 2006				

		Develop a plan for the contribution of the service to the education and skills element of the regeneration strategy	December 2006				
8	Improve employment opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Meet with external partners	September 2006	Number of learners entering work	Head of Adult Learning	July 2009	Staff time plus delivery costs (incorporated in provision plan)
		Ensure employability is an agenda item for LDD group meetings	October 2006	Number of learners achieving work related qualifications Number of learners achieving NVQ level 1			

9	Ensure there are clear protocols and communication links for NCL workforce development across the authority	Meet with Head of Training and Development and Employability Coordinator to agree a protocol and procedure	September 2006	Clear understanding of roles	Head of Adult Learning	December 2006	Staff time
		Monitor the implementation of the protocol	September 2006 and ongoing				
		Publicise the City Council's workforce learning and development plan when published	January 2006				

10	Develop a marketing plan for workforce development	Identify priority target group(s) for workforce development	October 2006	500 NVQs delivered in 2006/07	Employability Coordinator	July 2007	TBA
		Business Development Manager to develop marketing plan to engage employers and learners	October 2006				
		Implement marketing plan	November 2006				
		Evaluation of marketing	July 2007				

Communication of the Strategy

This section will detail how the strategy will be communicated

- Through a team briefing to be made available to managers by the Monday following the SLT meeting and delivered and discussed at the first possible meeting following.
- Summary in newsletter to be published following the briefing meetings - with a link to the full document

Caroline Miller to prepare the SLT briefing and involvement presentation

Caroline Miller to prepare the further team briefing and the planning framework

Monitoring the Strategy

- Day to day monitoring will be carried out by the Curriculum and Quality Manager
- Bi-monthly exception report to CLT which details progress to targets and any actions/milestones not achieved and amended dates for achievement
- Two "Stop the Track" days
- SAR process

Review of the Strategy

The strategy will be reviewed in September 2007