

Minutes of Employment, Learning and Skills Performance Group Meeting

Thursday 8th March 2007 at 3.30 p.m.

Present: Gary Collins (Chair), David Gray, John White, Lisa Driscoll

Apologies: Diane Sproson

1.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed
- 1.2 The additional information had been provided by Happen 4U and the project was now proceeding as planned. However, it was agreed that an audit visit to the project would be undertaken.

2.0 Riverside College Childcare Project

- 2.1 Janet Stanley from Riverside College attended the group to update on progress with the Childcare project.
- 2.2 27 people had originally attended an information day of which 23 people went on to register for the programme and 17 were registered for fees. The initial target was 10 enrolments
- 2.3 16 participants were still on the course and were progressing as planned.
- 2.4 Some elements of the programme had been reduced to fit in with the part time hours of the course, however, the course was highly intensive due to being delivered on a part-time basis.
- 2.5 It was generally agreed by the project manager that the pilot had been successful.
- 2.6 The project manager agreed to provide details of the ages, entry levels and postcode data of participants upon request.

- 2.7 The issue of follow up was raised and, although the College do not currently provide this it could be looked at. It was suggested that Halton People into Jobs might be available to assist with this.
- 2.8 The project was due to end in June/July 2007 due to the nature of the academic year.
- 2.9 The performance group were concerned that due to NRF finishing at the end of March 2008 this may present problems for funding the project for 2007/2008 as there would not be funding available for the final term of the academic year. The college would therefore potentially be liable to pick up the final term costs.
- 2.10 The project manager felt that as this project was additional to the mainstream provision at the college they did not necessarily need the project and it would not be a priority for them
- 2.11 It was felt that the success of the project had been due to the part time nature of the course and the performance group wondered whether it would be possible to incorporate this within the mainstream provision at the college.
- 2.12 It was agreed that Riverside College would look at the issues associated with the delivery of this project for 2007/2008 and that a the College SSP representative be prepared to discuss the options at the next SSP meeting
- 2.13 **It is therefore recommended that the SSP be asked to make a decision regarding the future of this project at the meeting on March 27th 2007.**

3.0 CAB Debt Advisors

- 3.1 The project manager for the debt advice project had requested the opportunity to update the group on some issues surrounding the project funding for 2007/2008
- 3.2 The CAB was awaiting confirmation of the total reduction in funding from both the local authority and other sources. With the NRF budget cut on top of this it was unclear at this stage how the Service would be affected for the 2007/2008 financial year. At the very least it was expected that the number of debt advisors would need to be reduced.
- 3.3 Evaluation of the project to date and figures provided to the Performance group show that levels of debt and areas of deprivation were linked across Halton and that most of the case work was taking place in these wards.

- 3.4 It is expected that cuts will be made in the numbers of office bases and in volunteer co-ordination. The results of a CAB survey into the impact of reducing services were currently being analysed.
- 3.5 A number of funding decisions were not expected until after the 26th March, making it difficult to produce a meaningful service agreement by the 21st March deadline.
- 3.6 It was requested that the project manager try and work out exactly what the NRF element would fund for this project in terms of cases etc.
- 3.7 It was recommended that the CAB project be granted additional time to complete the SLA until they had received final confirmation of all funding.**

4.0 Workforce Development

- 4.1 Siobhan Saunders, project manager for the Workforce Development project provided a progress update to the group.
- 4.2 Feedback from companies indicates that companies are less interested in level 2/3 qualifications and more interested in specific job/occupation focused courses.
- 4.3 This is the only funding available in Halton to fund this type of provision and companies are also expected to make a contribution to the course.
- 4.4 Wherever possible, Skills Brokers visit the company and will refer clients to Train to Gain if this provision is available. However, they will then refer to the Workforce Development Team if LSC funding is unsuitable.
- 4.5 Companies have initially been targeted through the Business Survey, with new companies also asked to complete the survey to build up a more extensive picture.
- 4.6 It is intended to target NRF target wards and SMEs first. This will ensure that criteria are in place in case of over-subscription to the project.
- 4.7 The long-term effect on businesses will be evaluated at the end of the project.
- 4.8 The project is on profile to achieve it's spend
- 4.9 It is recommended that the allocation of £44,100 for 2007/2008 be approved.**

5.0 Skills for Life

- 5.1 Alison Bowen, project manager for Skills for Life had produced a handout outlining progress throughout the year.
- 5.2 The first draft of the Skills for Life Strategy had been circulated to the SSP.
- 5.3 The project had overachieved on it's outcomes during Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. The Quarter 4 figures were still being updated.
- 5.4 The methods for mapping/collection of data had been finalised.
- 5.5 A list of Train to Gain contracts awarded in Halton had been provided by the LSC in order to help avoid duplication of effort
- 5.6 A number of smaller celebration of achievement events have taken place and will continue as participants often lack the confidence to attend large events
- 5.7 The YMCA has been using the Skills for Life Assessor frequently and Riverside College are beginning to do so.
- 5.8 The project is on course to achieve it's spend.
- 5.9 It is recommended that the 2007/2008 NRF allocation of £40,500 be approved.**