



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills

This project is funded by:



Leading learning and skills

Project Case Study

St Antony's Centre, Pathway to NVQ Level 2

Project Overview

The Pathway to NVQ Level 2 programme provides learning support and vocational skills development to help employees with low or outdated skills to achieve NVQ Level 1 in Information Technology (IT). Following the achievement of the NVQ Level 1, participants are given the opportunity to progress onto an NVQ Level 2.

Open to employees in Greater Manchester who do not hold NVQ Level 2 qualifications, the programme is funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as part its 2007-10 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan and delivered through St. Antony's Centre in Trafford Park.

The initiative aims to help workers to acquire economically valuable skills as a basis for progression onto higher level learning, resulting in an improvement to the skills base, productivity and motivation of the employer's workforce.

How it works

The programme advisors work closely with both employers and employees to ensure training is delivered flexibly and responsively, and meets the requirements of both parties.

Employees from a variety of workplaces can access the programme which is designed to work around different shift patterns. A learning agreement is arranged with the employer in advance and then the programme is tailored specifically to the businesses' needs ensuring any disruption is minimised.

An awareness raising mobile 'learning bus', offering taster sessions in IT and on-site learner assessments is used to gauge the skill levels of the workforce before employees are recruited onto the scheme.

Following an initial diagnostic assessment of individual learner needs, participants are trained within the workplace. As many of the beneficiaries have not engaged with learning for some time many are apprehensive about taking part, therefore the training is delivered in small groups to help them feel more at ease.

Learning activity is focused on a number of priority sectors which rely on IT systems and employee knowledge to run operations successfully, including warehousing, distribution, engineering, manufacturing and the public sector.

Candidates are put forward for the programme through links with Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) based within businesses across the region. The ULRs work to promote the benefits of learning to their colleagues and undertake surveys to identify skills gaps. Pathway to NVQ Level 2 trainers are then able to identify and assess the needs and skill levels of candidates put forward and if eligible recruit them onto the programme.

Impact and Success

The programme is currently working with a number of companies in a range of industrial sectors and since August 2008, 50 learners from eight different employers in Greater Manchester have enrolled and completed individual learning plans to identify their learning aims and goals.

Ten learners achieved their qualification in August 2009. A further twenty learners are currently completing their learning portfolios, of whom 4 are expected to achieve their NVQ Level 1 in IT by the end of September 2009.

Due to the close working relationships and on-site training available through the programme, 25 candidates have completed the eight weeks training in line with the contracted targets.

Administrator Beverley Scott had no IT qualifications and only a basic knowledge of IT before taking part in the programme. Due to childcare commitments and time

constraints, Beverley had not previously been able to access the training she required.

The programme enabled Beverley to take advantage of the training on offer, and the course was structured around her availability and learning style. She was able to take as much time as she needed to complete the training and become more familiar and confident in her use of IT.

Beverley is on target to achieve her NVQ Level 1 in IT, and because of her improved knowledge and increased self-confidence gained through the programme, she is now considering progressing to a higher level qualification in order to enhance and develop her skills further.

Ends

23 September 2009