



**EVERYONE CAN CARE**

**CONTRACT NUMBER SW900VALCON371**

**FINAL REPORT APRIL 2009**

## Introduction

The project *Everyone Can Care* was submitted by Ultra Training in response to an invitation to tender for the delivery of South West equality and diversity projects from the West of England Learning and Skills Council (LSC) dated 17 June 2008. Authorisation for the project to commence was given on 26 August 2008 and an interim report on progress was submitted in early January 2009. This further, final, report: i. summarises the project progress to the end of December 2008, ii. details activities in the period January to March 2009, and iii. evaluates the project's success against its objectives.

## Project Overview

*Everyone Can Care* was designed to contribute towards meeting actions set out in the South West LSC's Equality and Diversity Action Plan; specifically it aimed to assist the following actions:

- i) To improve participation and success for disabled and ethnic minority learners and to break down occupational gender segregation (SES Reference 1.2 – Develop an action plan to challenge and change current participation trends in work-based learning)
- ii) To enable employers to access support mechanisms to help them develop understanding of their responsibilities regarding equality legislation (SES Reference 1.8 – Make the business case to employers for the benefits of promoting equality and diversity and plan provision accordingly)
- iii) To improve participation and success of under-represented groups (SES Reference 4.1 – Complete setting of national EDIMs and review EDIMs annually)

Ultra Training aimed to increase the proportion of male participation in its LSC mainstream learning programmes in the health and social care sector and also to improve male success rates, particularly in apprenticeships. This was to be achieved by: i) engagement with and encouragement of employers to recruit male staff and/or to seek learning and skills programmes for their existing male staff; ii) encouraging potential learners, who were either currently employed in the health and social care sector or who were considering a career in

the sector, to participate in learning and skills programmes; iii) undertaking measures to improve retention and framework achievement of existing apprentices in the health and social care sector.

Tasks to be undertaken by the project in order to meet these aims were specified as: i) the production of case studies of male 'champions' in the health and social care sector for use as marketing leaflets and website pages; ii) the production of a bespoke marketing brochure for male learners in the health and social care sector; iii) a mail marketing campaign to health and social care employers together with follow-up telephone calls; iv) internal training of assessors and verifiers operating in the health and social care sector in order to equip them to promote the benefits of a diverse work force to employers; v) increased periodicity of assessment and pastoral visits to male apprentices in the care sector.

### Summary of Progress to December 2008

The project started around a month later than originally anticipated and this had a knock-on effect on milestone achievement. Training on equality and diversity conducted by Gary Mitchell Consultancy was delivered on 8 and 14 October, rather than in September as originally planned. The aim of this training being to equip Ultra's staff with the skills necessary to promote the benefits of a diverse work force to employers.

Work on mail and telephone marketing focussed on the production of case studies for male care worker champions and a brochure marketing the benefits of male care workers. Four male 'champions' were identified, two each in childcare and health and social care, and the case studies produced in A5 leaflet form in October 2008. The brochure was delivered in late November rather than October as predicted. The later than planned production delayed the mail and telephone which commenced in December 2008.

An increase in assessment and pastoral review visits commenced as planned in September and continued through the period.

The South West Equality and Diversity Provider Network were briefed on project progress on 22 October 2008 and links forged with other providers delivering other similar LSC projects.

### Project Activity January to March 2009

The increased periodicity of male apprentice assessment and pastoral visits continued through the period although the total number conducted was smaller than the equivalent period in 2007/08 due to an overall reduction in Care apprentices.

The telephone marketing campaign started later than anticipated and continued through to April 2009 in order to complete all employers on Ultra's Customer Relations Management database. The task was more onerous than expected by Ultra and involved a considerable commitment of human resources. A total of 203 employers were called and a number of these required more than one call to establish contact. As might be expected with this type of marketing, a proportion did not want to discuss recruitment and other employers were not contactable. In general, however, the Business Support section that conducted the calls thought that the response was positive.

The South West Equality and Diversity Provider Network meeting on 28 January 2009 was held at Ultra's Bristol training centre.

### Specific Project Achievement Against Project Outcomes

1. *Improved employer understanding of the advantages of increasing their recruitment and skills training of male employees.*

Gathering quantitative evidence for this outcome proved difficult to achieve. The tight timescales of the project and the various delays experienced meant that production of a specific questionnaire, as suggested in the interim report, was not practicable. In addition, it was felt that mailing such a questionnaire so soon after the marketing brochure would have been meaningless. Ultra's staff thought the same considerations were true for the telephone poll: because of the delayed telephone marketing campaign a following call almost immediately after was not viable. As stated, however, in the interim

report, anecdotal evidence from Ultra's assessors remained positive with verbal feedback from employers almost exclusively good. For example, one employer in mid-Cornwall who took on a young male learner during the project period under the Education Maintenance Allowance was so impressed with the young man that they fully employed him within four months. In quantitative terms, the increase in the proportion of male learners recorded under outcome 2 below must indicate that employers have a better understanding of the advantages to be gained from employing male staff.

2. *Increased male learner participation in the health and social care sector from 10% to 12% (for academic year 2008/09).*

Overall numbers undertaking training in the health and social care sector with Ultra has decreased from 2007/08 to 2008/09. The principal reasons for this are deemed by Ultra to be the completion of a large workforce development project in mid 2008 and a reduction in staff within the sector, most notably Childcare, as a result of the depressed economy. Despite this decrease the proportion of male learner participation has increased during the project's lifetime from the baseline figure of 10%. Taken over the 12 months from 2007/08 Period 8 to 2008/09 Period 8 the total number of Care learners undertaking programmes was 1,199 with 185 of these being male. This represents a percentage participation of 15.4%. The final figure for male participation will not be available until the end of July 2009.

3. *Increased male apprenticeship framework success rates in health and social care from 55% to 60% (for academic year 2008/09).*

Achievement rates for the full academic year 2008/09 will not be available until the end of July 2009. For Ultra's youth apprenticeships Period 1 to 9 2008/09 there have been nine leavers two of whom were achievers. There are, however, a further 14 learners anticipated to achieve by the end of Period 12; this would equate to an achievement rate of 70%.

4. *Increased male participation to a total of 244 (for academic year 2008/09).*

As stated in outcome 2 there has been a large reduction in the overall number of Ultra Care learners and, despite an increase in the proportion of male learners from 10% to 15.4%, the overall numbers of male learners has dropped to 185 between Period 8 2007/08 and Period 8 2008/09. Indicative of the reduction in Childcare numbers is the unfortunate news two of the male 'champions' chosen for the case study leaflets as part of the project have been made redundant from their employment.

M Howlett

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