



Leading learning and skills

Invest to Change Project Report 2009/2010



**Report written by:
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Project Manager**

Invest to Change Project Report

Background and project aims

In 2008/9 Greater Merseyside was successful in attracting funding from the National Learning and Skills Council to plan and deliver an Invest to Change Project. The project aimed to develop provision for young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities.

Two key themes of the project were to:

- Build the capacity of providers to support young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities
- Enhance opportunities and improving the quality of provision through Workforce Development

Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership were contracted to manage the project. A Project Manager was appointed in September 2008. A Project Steering Group was then established.

The Steering group consisted of partners and stakeholders from the LSC, Greater Merseyside Connexions, Training Plus Merseyside, Rocket Training Ltd, King George V College, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Autism Initiatives UK and Liverpool Local Authority. The remit of the Steering group was to identify staff training needs, provide direction and guidance throughout the project, agree a delivery plan and budget, as well as formulating a communications strategy and evaluation process. The Steering group met on a monthly basis to monitor progress and outcomes of the project.

The Project Manager remit included: implementing the delivery plan, communicating with trainers, delegates and the steering group, managing the budget and implementing an evaluation process; including the final production of a Project Report to be disseminated to the Steering Group and key stakeholders.

The report details:

- Background and Project aims
- Process and Implementation
- Budget
- Training Events
- Attendance
- Evaluation
- Impact
- Key messages
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Appendices

Process and implementation

A Workforce Development Plan was formulated to address the training needs of Work Based Learning Tutors, College Staff and Connexions Personal Advisers. Practitioners and tutors were then invited to attend a series of training and development workshops to support them in identifying and responding to the needs of young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities. Project activities included the following:

- Independent Travel Training
- Dyslexia Capacity Building Training
- Autism Awareness
- Learning for Living and Work – Improving education and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties and /or disabilities
- A programme of Overcoming Barriers to Learning Workshops facilitated by Dr Gerald Lombard which focused on the factors causing young people to be disengaged
- Invest to Change Employer Event
- Complex and Specific Learning Difficulties – LLDD and disengaged learners

Budget

A Budget of £50,000 was allocated to this project. This included project management fees, costs of trainers and venues and additional resources such as printing costs, packs and pen drives. See Appendix 1 for a full break down of costs.

Training Events

Independent Travel Training – Train the Trainers

3 courses in Independent Travel Training, accredited by the Open College Network were commissioned from Halton Borough Council and took place on 27th February, 6th March and 3rd April 2009. The course aim was to provide candidates with the skills to train individuals with a learning disability to travel independently and included:

- How to undertake assessments
- Planning a 1-1 Travel Training Programme
- Teaching and Practicing Road Safety

A total of 24 delegates attended this from Work Based Learning, College and Connexions

Dyslexia Awareness and Recognition

2 Dyslexia Awareness and Recognition Courses were commissioned from Adult Dyslexia Access. This course was made up of 3 units accredited by Edexcel at Btec level 3, and was specifically written for providers of Post 16 Learning.

The 2 day courses took place on 4th and 5th March and 30th April and 1st May. 30 Delegates attended from Work Based Learning and College.

The Course aimed to assist delegates to understand the characteristics of Dyslexia and explore tools for diagnosing the condition and strategies for helping dyslexic young people to overcome barriers to learning.

Course content included:

- Understanding the characteristics of Dyslexia
- Exploring tools for diagnosis of dyslexia
- Assisting dyslexics overcome barriers

ASD Awareness

A one day Training course was commissioned from Autism Initiatives UK and took place on 18th March. The target audience was Work Based Learning Providers and 18 delegates attended. The aim was to raise awareness of the ASD Spectrum and to explore practical strategies to support young people in education, training and employment. The course provided the following:

- Overview of ASD/Aspergers syndrome
- Practical strategies in education and employment
- Addressing implications

Learning for Living and Work – Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

This conference held at the Crowne Plaza, Speke on 30th March, brought together 68 senior representatives from Merseyside stakeholders and learning providers. The key note speaker was Peter Little OBE Chair of Through Inclusion to Excellence who updated delegates on the national strategy around Learning for Living and Work and the changes to the machinery of Government. RNIB provided an update on the Centre for Sensory Excellence Project in Merseyside and delegates had an opportunity to attend 3 workshops including:

- Transitions Learning Programme – Leicester Adult Learning Service
- The Wirral Experience, Transition Planning – Wirral Local Authority
- Progression Pathways to Employment – Remploy

Identifying and Responding to Barriers to Learning

This series of Workshops were facilitated by Dr Ged Lombard and colleagues from the Independent Psychological Service (TIPS).

Course aims: To identify and address the reasons why individual learners do not achieve their full potential and to explore strategies and techniques for effectively assessing and supporting young people in learning.

Day 1 – Took place on 28th April 2009 and was attended by 55 delegates from Work Based Learning, College and Greater Merseyside Connexions

Course content included:

- SMART and NEET (Action Research)
- The Life Cycle: the importance of gaining an identity as a teenager, and how to provide teenagers with new identities
- Psychological Profiles of Disengaged Learners
- How to achieve high positive outcomes for NEET
- Assessment and LLDD issues

Day 2 for Work Based Learning Tutors took place on 12th May and was attended by 29 delegates

Day 2 for College staff took place on 20th May and was attended by 13 delegates

Day 2 for Connexions took place on 5th June and was attended by 30 delegates

Day 2 course content included:

- Biology basis to learning
- Science and Disengaged Learners
- Designing a learning programme for Disengaged Learners (WBL only)
- The amazing teenage brain
- The psychology of motivation
- Dealing with aggression
- Complex LLDD and assessment of needs

Invest to Change Employer Event

The Invest to Change to Change Employer Event took place at Liverpool Town Hall on 7th May 2009.

This Greater Merseyside event aimed to raise awareness about the contribution young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can make to the workplace.

The learning outcomes of the day were to:

- Encourage the recruitment of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities into employment opportunities
- Identify what support is available to Employers
- Share the success stories of young people who have made a successful transition into working life

The event was attended by 62 guests and speakers from a range of companies and agencies.

Complex Specific Learning Difficulties LLDD and NEET

This training workshop was facilitated by Dr Ged Lombard and colleagues from TIPS took place on 11th June and was attended by 64 delegates from Connexions, Work Based Learning and College.

Course content included:

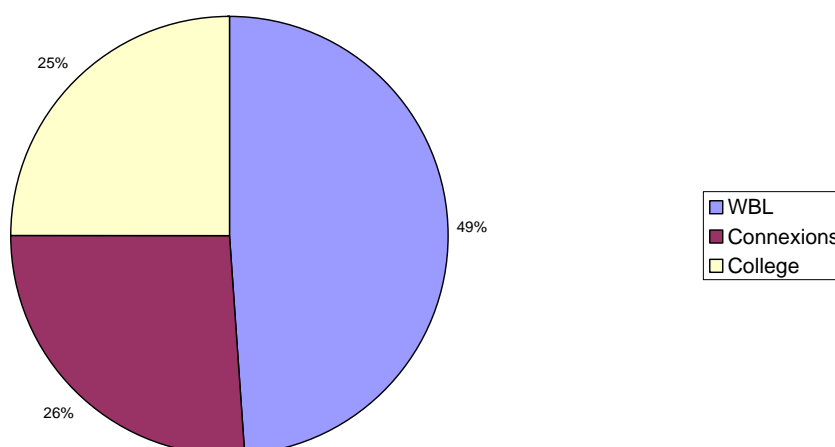
- Complex SpLD definitions
- Dyslexias
- Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome
- Dyspraxia
- Dysgraphia
- ADHD
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Staying Safe

Attendance

A total of 393 delegates attended the Invest to Change Events between February and June 09. Delegates came from Work Based Learning, Colleges of Further Education and from Greater Merseyside Connexions, although employers and other key partners attended the Invest to Change Employer Event in May and the Learning for Living and Work event in March.

See Fig 1 Participants by Occupational Group

Participants by Occupational Group



Evaluation

233 Evaluation sheets were received from delegates using the standard Invest to Change evaluation pro forma. See Appendix 2.

The Employer event and Learning for Living and Work Conference and second dyslexia training session were evaluated using a different style of pro forma.

- Of the 233 evaluations received 231 delegates found the ideas and information discussed at the workshop relevant to their work
- All delegates learned something new
- 232 delegates said they would be willing to undertake further training if funded

Strengths of the workshops were considered to be the following

- Activities and practical exercises
- Knowledge and experience of the presenters
- Quality of the presentations and the enthusiasm and interesting delivery of the training facilitators
- The mixture of information and practical examples
- The sharing of personal experience
- The opportunity to gain a recognised qualification (Dyslexia)
- The theory and research based workshops
- Good use of realistic examples to explain theories
- Relevance to client group
- Good ideas to take back to the work place
- Events met a variety of learning styles
- Appropriate and relevant situations presented
- A great range of stakeholders present
- Visual aids

Improvements to the events could have been

- Some input from young people
- More participation from delegates
- More group tasks
- Expansion on some points, possibly more work examples

Additional training needs around LDD

See Appendix 3

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Support for using the strategies outlined
- SLD
- ASD
- ADHD
- EBD
- Dyssemia
- Assessment of support needs, including psychological assessments
- Assessment around motivational styles
- How to explain and implement what has been taught in the workshops
- Communicating with young people with severe and complex learning difficulties

Steps that delegates considered taking to share the information and materials from the events

- Discussion with line manager
- Feeding back at team meetings
- Report to be written for the rest of the team to share
- Training sessions with staff
- To provide small workshops for students
- All staff attending training will look at how to implement
- Distribute copies of the slides
- Will request the purchase of Ged's books to share with colleagues
- I will recommend that other staff attend similar events as they would benefit greatly

Impact

A post course training evaluation has been disseminated to Practitioners to measure impact of the training on individual practice and the organisation. Early responses to this indicate that there are 4 main areas of impact:

- Knowledge and awareness
- Assessment of need
- Strategies
- Outcomes for young people

Knowledge and awareness

Initial feedback from evaluation indicates that the training has enhanced staff knowledge and awareness of young people's issues, difficulties and diverse learning styles, including the possible causes and what might be done to

address these. Staff especially valued the sessions on Dyssemia led by Ged Lombard, many commenting that they had previously been unaware of this condition.

Other delegates observed that the training had helped them to become more sensitive and empathetic to young people's needs and support requirements, including a better understanding of how LDD can impact on a young person's life.

Assessment of need

Delegates identified that the training would support them to make more effective assessments of need, including increasing the scope of initial assessments to include emotional and behavioural issues. The dyssemia rating scale was highlighted as a useful tool.

Strategies

Many delegates commented that the training provided effective strategies to use with this client group. Examples already embedded into practice are changing the handouts used with dyslexic students, using personal art logos and other creative techniques.

Impact on young people

Delegates identified that using the strategies suggested by the training could improve attainment and motivate students to achieve. One delegate commented that the training had had:

“Excellent benefits as I am now able to support learners in much more depth and recognise specific learning difficulties”

A Connexions Personal Adviser commented that the training had equipped them to negotiate appropriate training and support for young people in Post 16 Learning.

Key messages

Delegates were overwhelmingly positive about the strategies described on the various courses, but some doubts were expressed about whether the resources required to implement these would be made available in the workplace; from the Independent Travel Training there were concerns about

“the amount of time required to give this training – unsure that this course could be accommodated within college”

However, there was evidence that delegates were willing to try to put the training into action:

“I could really relate to this and I really want to know more, I tried something similar to engage my learners, but no where near what you have shown that you do”

“I will run an in house training session with my colleagues”

“Provide small workshops for students to agree behavioural codes”

Delegates attending the training were clear about their responsibilities to cascade the strategies and ideas on to managers and colleagues in their teams, with many intending to discuss the topics in team meetings. Discussions with managers should include identifying what steps need to be taken to embed the training into practice and what resources should be allocated to this.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of psychological support and other experts to refer young people to in the Merseyside area, as and when required:

“... no where offers therapy...we need this project in Liverpool.”
“The proposed methods are best implemented by trained professionals – ideally Ged and his team to provide the service”.

Delegates expressed an interest in follow up sessions with Ged Lombard and the Tips team in order to develop the skills and confidence to implement the strategies advocated. A portion of any further funding granted should provide a more specific train the trainers course in order to develop the capacity of ‘champions’ in each sector to build and disseminate practice.

Evaluation of all the training events has identified a number of outstanding training needs, which any subsequent Invest to Change Project will address in the 2009/10 Training and Development Plan.

Delegates were very positive about all events and indicated their willingness to attend further training, particularly specific workshops:

“I would like to take it a step further and learn more about how to become an assessor/diagnostician”
“Much more in depth training – I have all the basics but need depth”

Delegates greatly appreciated the chance to gain an accredited qualification in Dyslexia recognition and awareness. However, demand for the dyslexia training exceeded the two courses provided by the project. Further places will be made available, if additional funding is granted.

A key message from the Employer event was that appropriate support provided to a young person with LDD need not be expensive and could benefit all members of staff: young people should not be overlooked because they have a disability:

“many young people are overlooked by employers because they have a learning difficulty or disability and my message to them is everyone deserves a chance because who knows what passion and skills they have to offer... I have been lucky to be given this chance and I really am living the dream”.

The passion, dedication and loyalty shown by young people with LDD can make a huge contribution to the work place:

“Don’t judge a book by its cover! People who have disabilities and learning difficulties have lots to offer. The most important thing is the passion from within this person. This in my eyes overcomes any disability or learning difficulty, an employer has also got to be passionate for this person to succeed”.

Invest to Change should continue to encourage employers to recruit young people with LDD and to provide appropriate support in the workplace. Any further employer event next year should celebrate best practice and recognise the achievements of individual employers and young people in this area.

The steering group provided a strong partnership approach and invaluable support throughout the project, both through the monthly meetings and the attendance of some members at the training sessions. Stakeholders should continue to be represented on the steering group.

Should further funding be made available then the 2009/10 project should be launched by a celebration event, which would review the successes of the 08 / 09 Project and to raise awareness of 2009/10 proposals. Training should continue to be multi agency in nature to support cross sector collaboration.

Recommendations

- 1. Discussion should now take place between staff who attended the training and their managers within specific agencies to agree next steps in implementing the training**
- 2. Commission a ‘train the trainers’ course to develop the capacity of ‘champions’ in each sector to build and disseminate practice**
- 3. Any further Invest to Change funding will address outstanding training needs identified via evaluation surveys**
- 4. Further training places to be made available on the Dyslexia Recognition and Awareness course**
- 5. The Steering group should continue to represent key stakeholders**
- 6. Any further Invest to Change Project should be launched by a celebration event to recognise achievements and identify best practice.**

Conclusion

Successful implementation of the Invest to Change project depends now on staff who attended the training sessions implementing and trying out the strategies and skills learnt and the willingness of their organisations to support and provide resources for this.

A clear message from the evaluations was that staff had valued the training and the opportunity to work in partnership with colleagues from other sectors. Delegates also demonstrated their willingness to learn from the training and pass on their learning to others. Commitment to assessing the needs and supporting the learning of young people with LDD was an evident priority for most delegates.

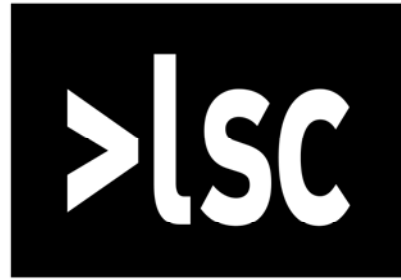
In conclusion I would like to say thank you to the LSC for their funding and support for this project and to pass on my gratitude and appreciation to all trainers and facilitators involved in the project and the steering group and other key partners and young people involved in planning and contributing to events. (See Appendix 4 for Steering Group contact details) Last but not least I would like to thank our 393 delegates who attended and participated so enthusiastically.

**APPENDIX 1
Summary of Budget**

Event	Trainer Costs	Venue	Delegates	Total
Dyslexia Training	£500 per head	Dyslexia Centre, Waterloo No additional cost	30 10 places funded by invest to change 10 places funded by LSC 5 places via WLPN 5 free places	£12,500 invest to change £6875 £5000 GMLPF £2500 WLPN
Independent Travel Training	Jacqui Dunbavin £180 per candidate	Halton council No additional cost and lunch provided Wavertree Training Centre Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane, Bromborough	24	£3060
Autism Awareness		PFL 29.95 per head	18	£2463.39
Ged Lombard Training costs	£10, 000			£10,000
Awareness Raising – Key Factors in making NEET EET 28 th April		£2,396 Plus VAT PFL Theatre £29.95 per head	80	£2755.40
Awareness Raising – Key Factors in making				£172.21

NEET EET Day 2 Connexions 5 th June				
Awareness Raising – Key Factors in making NEET EET Day 2 College 20 th May		Wavertree Training Centre £350	12	£350
Awareness Raising – Key Factors in making NEET EET Day 3 11 th June		PFL	70	£2410.97
Breaking down the barriers – Employer Event 7 th May		£1,616		£1,616
Pen Drives for employer event		£1092.50		£1092.50
Promoting Excellence to Learning, Living and working 30 th March				£5,849
Connexions Management Fees	£6000			£6000
Stationery/printing	£500			£500
Total				£44,281 .07

APPENDIX 2



Leading learning and skills

Invest to Change

Identifying and Responding to Barriers to Learning – Day 2
5th June 2009

Evaluation Questionnaire

Please tick box, where appropriate

1. Generally did you find the ideas and information discussed at this Workshop relevant to your work?

Yes

No

Comments

2. Did you learn anything new?

Yes

No

3. My additional learning needs around LLDD are:

.....

4. How would you rate the venue?

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Fair

5. Generally did you find the organisation of the day

Excellent Very Good Good Fair

6. Strengths of the Workshop were?

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.....
.....

7. How could we improve the event?

.....
.....
.....

8. Are you willing to undertake further training around LLDD if funded?

Yes No

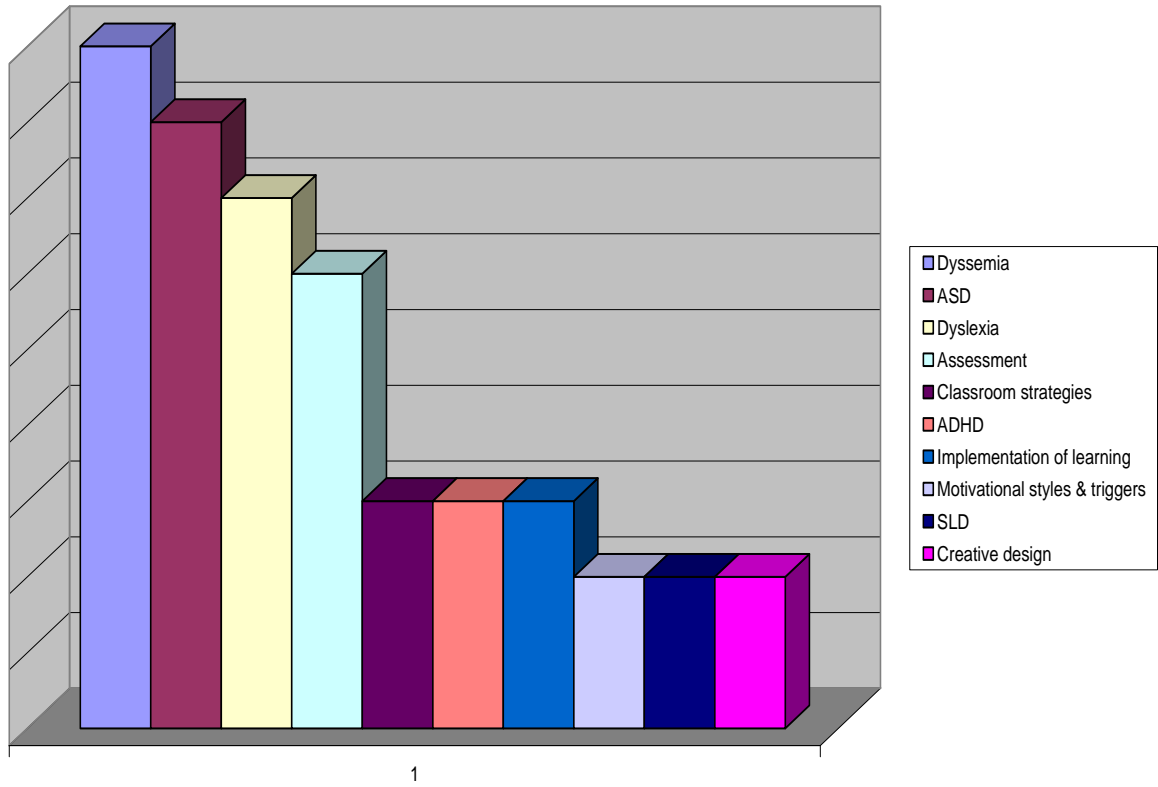
9. What steps will you take to share with colleagues the ideas and information provided today?

.....
.....
.....

Please complete and return to the workshop leader at the end of the day

APPENDIX 3

Information on Additional Training Needs



APPENDIX 4

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