



Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium: **The Power of Collaboration!**
Proactive East Midlands



Summary

Within a context of funding shortages and a drive for efficiencies this voluntary sector consortium sought to explore and capitalise on stronger collaboration with the independent and private sector.

About Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium

Derbyshire Learning & Development Consortium was established in 2000 to support Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations across Derbyshire access funding and key information to enable them to develop and deliver high quality learning and development opportunities for their staff, volunteers, clients and learners.

The challenge

With the impact of minimum contract values it is essential that smaller providers join up in order to develop genuine collaboration which can lead to accessing higher value contracts and also more efficient delivery of quality training and learning.

The activity

The Power of Collaboration!

PROACTIVE East Midlands was funded through the LSIS Regional Response Fund.

The group consists of representatives from work based learning, the FE sector, public agencies (Jobcentre Plus and the PCT) and the wider voluntary and Community sector.

This group has 'networked the existing networks', provided a regional voice, identified two key issues (subcontractor management and Train to Gain transition into Apprenticeships) and disseminated findings and information through a conference in September 2011. Four workshops were held: covering subcontracting – Both Sides of the Story, Partnership Working and More for Less, Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners and Free Tools for Collaborative Working.

PROACTIVE East Midlands seeks to influence government strategy and make a difference at national, regional, local and institutional levels. It is a model which can be replicated celebrating success by focusing on what can be done rather than what can't.

Individuals involved not only represent their sectors and organisations but have signed a pledge to fulfill requirements of their role i.e. two way flow of information - ensuring their own members and organisations are kept up to date, carry out actions agreed, complete case studies, share data, etc.

The purpose and objectives of the group may change over time but it will initially work on the two key areas identified and will agree actions to influence and drive forward government policy, and to respond quickly to the challenges of reduced funding in relation to quality improvement.

The outcomes

- A sustainable network which could be replicated.
- Awareness raising of issues identified and addressed for the two key areas - Subcontractor management and Train to Gain transition into Apprenticeships.
- A regional 'sector voice' to lobby influence and share good practice.
- Already joint bids have been submitted through this network and providers are using each other on their main contracts e.g. NEET
- Joint delivery between sectors of the PTTLs and DTTLs courses – thus reducing provider costs
- Successful bid by DLDC to develop the Community Development Network funded by LSIS
- The critical importance of staying focused on the *learners*
- A financial impact which demonstrates added value of 3:1 i.e. for each £1 contributed by LSIS the project/sector will benefit by £3 through a true partnership shared approach – thus providing 'more for less'.
- Conference and four workshops delivered at the East Midlands Conference Centre, on 30th September.

The impact

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The lessons learned

- That the independent private sector and the voluntary and community sector have much in common: above all a commitment to the learner
- There is scope for the two sectors to work in genuine partnership – through joint bidding and joint delivery

Useful links

- [Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium website](#)
- [Third Sector National Learning Alliance \(TSNLA\)](#)