

“Update London”

let's talk care | spring 09

are you aware of the Qualifications & Credit Framework?

The Qualifications and Credit Framework is a new flexible way of recognising and accrediting skills and qualifications. [Laura Anthony](#) reports on what this means for social care employers.

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) presents units and qualifications in a simpler way, leading to qualifications that are flexible in meeting the skills and knowledge needs of the workforce. Just some of the benefits of the QCF include:

- Its recognition of a wider range of achievement through the award of credit for units and qualifications. Credit is attached to units and qualifications which can then be accumulated by learners to go towards larger or future qualifications
- Its flexibility – learners will be provided with a variety of routes to gaining full qualifications
- Its responsiveness to employer needs – all units and qualifications on the framework must meet the needs of the workforce in order to be accredited

Skills for Care are currently working with Alliance partners across the UK to proceed with the development of the QCF, and have confirmed some of the following principles for future qualification design and structure:

- The existing NVQ Level 2 qualification will be replaced by a QCF Diploma at 'full Level 2'.
- Within the QCF, Awards & Certificates (smaller qualifications) can be used to encourage continuing professional development and improve transferability within the workforce. These Awards and Certificates may then be part of the larger Diploma qualification through the 'rules of combination'. For example: there will be awards based on the Common Induction Standards enabling this learning to be accredited and possibly count towards the larger Diploma

qualification. There may also be an award based on the Management Induction Standards.

- The use of what is being called a 'spikey profile' in qualification design. For example not all learning within a qualification has to be at the level of the qualification - some units could be at a higher or lower level to reflect the job role.

Ministers have now approved the QCF for implementation across all sectors and Skills for Care has identified how it will take forward the population of qualifications onto the new framework. The aim is for all qualifications to be on the QCF by the end of 2010.

For more information about the QCF, please contact Laura Anthony (details page 2).

welcome to Skills for Care London

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The Skills for Care London Regional Committee meets 4 times a year in central London to address social care issues within the capital. To find out more call: (020) 7471 6774

Current Skills for Care London Regional Committee members are:

David Crosbie (Chair)
Chandana Sanyal (Chair, North Central London Sub-Region)
Mark Waterman (Learning and Skills Councils in London)
Susie Elwin (London Development Agency)

John Nawrockyi (London ADASS)
Mark Brangwyn (London Councils)
Jane Lindsay (Higher Education)
Kris Meyers (Learn to Care)
Les Perkins (Unison)
Tim Russell (Association for Real Change)
Sarah King (United Kingdom Home Care Association)
Mike Nash (Chair, South West London Sub-Region)
Buko Esegbona (Co-Chair, North West London Sub-Region)
Janis Devers (Co-Chair, North West London Sub-Region)
Jenny Dutton (Chair, North East London Sub-Region)

Elaine Picton (Commission for Social Care Inspection)
Maddy Thomson - Skills for Care London Regional Development Manager
John Gilliland (National Care Association)
Janet Palmer (ACTAN)
Alice Wallace (Councils for Voluntary Service)
Carol-Ann Braynsmith (Voluntary Sector)
Kusam Bedi (Chair, South East London Sub-Region)
Helena Little (English Community Care Association)

welcome to our spring Update London

Wherever you are in the sector you must be aware of the personalisation and transformation agenda. Conferences, papers, press releases are in abundance. But what does this mean for you and your workforce?

At Skills for Care we are committed to supporting employers to develop the workforce that is needed now and for the future. In London, we have begun to explore what this means with you at a number of forums and events and through action learning, and there is more to come in 2009.



Maddy Thomson
Regional Development Officer

One of the big changes on the horizon is the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The update on the front cover might seem a bit technical, but in fact the introduction of the QCF can be seen as timely for the social care sector.

Employers have been telling us that training and qualifications need to be more flexible and that small elements of learning and achievement need to 'count'. Well, the QCF has the potential to make this happen. Rapid development is required over the next year in order to make this work for you

and a lot of attention is being given to this both nationally and regionally within Skills for Care. We are here to answer your questions and keep you informed during this period of development throughout 2009.

The tributes to Ed Annis, our colleague who died in October, have been many. I would like to add that Ed had the ability to connect with employers and their staff in order to communicate value and to offer real support and guidance with workforce development. For myself and the rest of the team this remains our aspiration as we move forward into 2009.

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Skills for Care training materials listing

Skills for Care provides a listing of training materials created by other publishers that are available for employers/managers and trainers to purchase.

Helping workforce development by making it easier for employers to deliver in-house training targeted at immediate needs, this useful resource for both employers and publishers provides a single point of reference for training materials.

For a small fee, publishers can use the resource to advertise their

materials to a wider audience.

The list contains publications on a wide range of topics – from care planning to nutrition – and is organised by subject category, making it easy to navigate. There is also the option to search for key words.

The list, which is updated monthly, can be downloaded from the 'qualifications & training' section of the Skills for Care national website (www.skillsforcare.org.uk).

Publishers wishing to have

materials included on the list should e-mail publishinglist@skillsforcare.org.uk. The listings template is available to download from the Skills for Care website.

Feedback on the usefulness of this listing and suggestions for improvements are always welcomed. Please send any comments to publishinglist@skillsforcare.org.uk

Please note that inclusion on the list does not imply endorsement or accreditation by Skills for Care.

independent support brokers – skills and knowledge consultation

In May 2008 Skills for Care London acted on the recommendations of the regional New Types of Worker mapping report (McDonnell & Zutshi, 2007) and commissioned two research initiatives exploring the role, potential competencies required and future learning needs of personal assistants and support brokers.

The National Development Team (NDT) undertook to examine the type of skills and knowledge potentially required by people undertaking the support broker role, via a series of consultations with major

stakeholder organisations. As the role begins to develop in response to the emergence of 'individually funded systems', a number of key concerns apply: firstly that the role evolves organically; and secondly, the risk of 'over professionalisation' associated with, amongst other things, restrictive regulatory requirements.

The resulting paper and Executive Summary (due to be launched this February) take account of these issues and build a position based on clear definitions of the context, scope of the role and service characteristics.

The resulting recommendations propose a minimum skill set and consider accreditation and the continued development of standards that support new and emerging roles.

In March, SfC London will be joining colleagues from the North West to facilitate round table discussions – the aim is to progress discussions about these workforce implications for brokerage. There will be a follow up paper later in the year.

For further information, please contact Michael Armstrong (details page 2).

Q&A

Tim Russell, London Regional Committee member, speaks to Skills for Care London



Q Please can you tell us a bit about your background in the social care sector?

A When I returned from backpacking my way around the world in 2002, I decided to change career path. Having spent my earlier career in the Information Technology sector, I joined ARC, the Association for Real Change. I worked as a project administrator and my role entailed working with a number of learning disability service providers to try and assist in overcoming recruitment difficulties. From there I became the ARC Project Officer for the London region and worked on a multi-million pound project delivering the Learning Disability Awards Framework Induction and Foundation funded through the European Social Fund.

My current role is the Research & Development Manager for Walsingham, who are members of ARC, and provide services for adults with learning disabilities throughout England and Wales.

Q How did you first become involved with Skills for Care London?

A When I became the Project Officer for ARC within the London Region in 2004, it coincided with the then Regional Committee chair and ARC representative, Paul Snell, stepping down from his post. I then took over representing ARC and have remained in that post ever since.

Q Who do you currently represent on the Regional Committee?

A Although I am directly employed by Walsingham, I currently represent the Association for Real Change (ARC) on the Regional Committee.

Q Please can you tell us about two pieces of work undertaken by Skills for Care London over the past 12 months which you felt to be particularly successful?

A Having played a role in embedding the previous

Learning Disability Induction and Foundation awards I would say that the new Learning Disability Induction Award, which is mapped to the Skills for Care Common Induction Standards, has been a success and provides employees new to the sector with a vital introduction to their role.

The second successful piece of work I would mention is the New Types of Worker Programme, which has provided some very useful insights into innovation within the sector regarding the personalisation agenda and its implications for workforce design.

Q What do you think are the major issues facing the adult social care sector over the next 12 months?

A The major issue facing the sector is the personalisation agenda, which will have numerous implications for all stakeholders including commissioners, regulators, providers, carers and people who use services. There are many challenges ahead, however, if all of these stakeholders work collaboratively then there will no doubt be many benefits for people who use services and their needs and expectations should be better met as a result.

working with the voluntary sector

Cheryl Gregory looks at why it's never been more important to engage with the voluntary sector. One in 50 of the UK's workforce is in the voluntary sector – and about one in 100 work in voluntary sector social care related jobs (Community Care, 2007).

Over the last six months, Skills for Care North East London have been working closely with the East London Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS) network (ELN) to increase engagement and participation as well as awareness and knowledge of the work & role of Skills for Care London amongst voluntary sector employers.



One strand of the approach has been to arrange workshops that address issues that will affect the third sector. From research and several conversations, it was evident that more information was needed around the personalisation agenda and how this will affect the third sector in the near future.

In response to this, Skills for Care and ELN are planning to hold three workshops, the first being for CVS Directors and local authorities (including transformation social care leads) on the 13th February 2009.

The workshop will look at the following:

- The implications of the transforming social care agenda and how these will affect the third sector
- The likely effect that this



will have on commissioned services and the infrastructure support that front line services will need in the future

- The planning that needs to take place

This will be followed by two workshops in March that are specifically for front line services.

These workshops will build on messages from the 13th February session, but look more specifically at the introduction to the 'transforming social care' agenda, such as:

- What does this mean for services currently funded?
- What practices need to be

put in place to adapt to this e.g. implications in terms of budgeting and wider marketing?

Messages coming from these workshops will be reported and conveyed with an onus on the local CVS's to ensure that providers are supported in terms of training and signposting.

For more information on this project, please contact Cheryl Gregory (details page 2).

For more information on the work of the network, visit the ELN website – www.elcvsnetwork.org.uk

Skills for Life...the journey so far!

Do you worry about your ability to use information and communicate effectively? If so, you are not alone. [Edith Ifekwuna](#) looks at how Care Skillsbase, a new free online tool developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Skills for Care, can help.

Concerns about adult literacy and numeracy are rarely out of the news these days and research into the care workforce suggests one care worker in five lacks GCSE-level literacy and numeracy. Even graduates are criticised for poor basic skills.

To help employers and managers address the problem, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), together with Skills for Care (SfC), has developed Care Skillsbase, an innovative, web-based tool.

Like all SCIE products, Care Skillsbase resources will be free for employers and managers to access and download, and the resource will be officially launched at the Skills for Care National Conference in London on the 24th February 2009.

Care Skillsbase aims to help social care employers:

- Identify the communication and number skills staff need to do their jobs
- Check staff have the communication and number skills required
- Discuss skills issues constructively with staff
- Manage any risks to safety and quality

- Facilitate staff development.

Why use Skillsbase?

Better skills equals better social care and all social care staff use information and communicate in their jobs. To do this effectively they need:

- Speaking and listening skills
- Number skills
- Reading and writing skills

Care Skillsbase helps managers in the care sector take constructive action on these skills.

How does Care Skillsbase work?

Care Skillsbase aims to help employers to do three things:

- Identify the communication and number skills required by jobs in their organisations
- Check that individual members of staff have the communication and number skills they need to work safely and meet quality standards
- Take constructive action on any issues that arise regarding communication and number skills, to safeguard clients and support staff

Care Skillsbase will offer employers and managers three core tools to use:

'Check Skills' tool. Skills checks are short exercises that help a manager decide if a member of staff has the communication and number skills needed to work safely and meet quality standards.

'Manage Skills' tool. This offers practical, step-by-step guidance and resources to identify where staff need to apply communication and number skills, manage any risk and support learning.

'Compare Standards'. This tool offers managers instant access to the sector standards that define safety and quality: the Common Induction Standards (CIS), the Health and Social Care National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) (at levels 2, 3 and 4) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC) code of practice.

For more information on Care Skillsbase or Skills for Life in the workplace, please contact Pippa Doran or Edith Ifekwuna (details page 2)

tribute to Ed Annis

Following the sad and unexpected death in October of Ed Annis, Sub-Regional Co-ordinator for South West London, a large number of tributes have come in from those who knew & worked with Ed.

Ed Annis was highly valued both as a colleague and as a friend by those who knew and worked with him. The tributes received (a selection of which can be seen below) highlight the impact Ed made during his time working for Skills for Care London’.

‘Ed - I have missed your great sense of humour and also your direct and ‘can do’ approach to getting things done. Your invaluable experience in the care sector and the positive difference you were making are a real loss for both Skills for Care and the South West sub-region. There are so many colleagues who have contacted me to let me know the important and particular ways you made a difference - especially the SW Care Ambassadors and Transforming Lives participants. I know how important both these pieces of work were to you and your family can be very proud of your outstanding contribution. Our thoughts are with them at this very difficult time’

Bambie Maxwell, Skills for Care

‘Ed Annis was someone who once met you never forgot. During his interview

Ed impressed me with his knowledge and commitment to the cause of social care. He had that cheeky, you will see smile, which I miss a lot. He made an impression on all who worked with him, his humour, kindness and enthusiasm for the areas of work he was involved with, were a great help in achieving the objectives of the South West sub-region.

I remember saying to Ed, I want us to lead and not be part of the pack on the Care Ambassador initiative, and he took great pleasure informing me in October 2008 of his 12th trained recruit and the ten workshops delivered.

The success of the Transforming Lives project is a testament of Ed’s influence and support as stated by all who participated. I am proud of his achievements in this and the numerous areas he worked on and am very proud to have known and worked with such a special person’

Mike Nash, Chair, Skills for Care South West London sub-group

‘I remember the first time I met Ed; he told me about himself and his plans for his new role

in South West London. He was proud of his family and often talked about them. It was like talking to a friend, and that is what he became, as well as a colleague who I worked with on many different projects. The SW London conference in July was the last big piece of work I and many others from the SW London sub-group worked on together with Ed. It was a time consuming job, but Ed never lost his sense of fun and was very realistic about what we could achieve. In the end it was a great event, a real success. The SW London sub-group will never be the same without Ed.’
Kris Meyers, Vice-Chair, Skills for Care South West London sub-group

‘We thoroughly enjoyed working with Ed, if only for a short time. We will both miss his support, enthusiasm, great knowledge and understanding, and mostly his wonderful sense of humour’

Lynn Bird & Sarah Withey, South West London Care Ambassadors

‘Big heart – big man. Made a great impression very quickly – made us laugh and got results – an uncommon combination



in an uncommon man. A real loss to us all at LB Sutton as a colleague and a loss to all of us who got his humour. I know I did and it brightened many a meeting'

Vanessa Naylor, LB Sutton

'I had the pleasure of working with Ed in South West London as his Administrator. I loved working with him; from day one he treated me as an equal and together it was the most productive and positive working relationship I've ever had. His strengths were my weaknesses and visa versa. He always valued the work I did and never thought of me just as Admin – we were a team; he was such a positive influence. He made a massive difference to so many

people's lives and jobs in the role he was in. He lifted people's spirits with his jokes and witty banter; everyone thought highly of him both in our sub-region and at Skills for Care.

I really valued his friendship and talked to him about anything and everything, we had an unspoken trust. He was a real family man who absolutely adored his wife and son.

Ed was a hilariously funny; intelligent; caring; decent man. I miss my friend dearly'

Izzy Heron, LB Croydon

'Ed was such a huge support to us during the Transforming Lives project. More recently, I asked Ed's advice on how to

gain funding for myself, and he pointed me in a direction I would never have been able to find myself. Just this week I found that my claim for additional funding was agreed and that I would be able to start a DipHE in Dementia Studies. Without Ed's support and advice, I wouldn't have been able to fund it all myself. I'm now not able to tell him what a huge help he was.

We were hoping to continue our group and meet periodically, with Ed's support. We had the choice, with or without him and I think we all would have wanted his input, professionally and for his humour. I will miss Ed very much'

Zoe Smith, Marling Court Residential Care Home

SOUTH WEST LONDON SUB-REGION

This winter has brought in a mixed experience for the South West London sub-region. It has suffered an irreplaceable loss after the sudden and untimely death of Ed Annis, the South West London Sub-Regional Co-ordinator. Ed's contribution to South West London can still be felt by those who had the opportunity to work with him and he will be sadly missed.

However, with plenty of activities on the schedule, the sub-region has managed to pull through amidst the shock. The popular Successful Supervisory Management Programme (SSMP) is now back as a second pilot scheme. It is being hosted at Croydon Council in two separate cohorts – one of which started in October, and the other in November. The programme will reach its culmination on the 15th April 2009, with individual presentations by the course participants.

A Practice Learning event for the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector was held at Fairfield Halls, Croydon in association with Skills for Care South East London, on the 20th of January 2009. The



event was attended by 32 delegates, representing PVI and statutory employers, universities and placement students.

The event drew attention to the importance of student placements in the PVI sector and focused on the need for service user involvement. It also informed those in attendance what Skills for Care has to offer to both students and placement providers. A resource pack containing valuable guidance on supporting students during placements was distributed, which became instantly popular among the delegates. One satisfied delegate commented: "Very informative, very useful, greatly valued and overjoyed to have attended such an interesting and useful event", while another remarked, "I very much enjoyed the whole event and consider I learnt much from hearing of experiences of others – much not new, but slightly

different perspectives enabled me to reflect on my own work".

On the 21st January 2009, the London Borough of Croydon hosted Mental Health Awareness training at Croydon Town Hall. The event had attracted a huge response when it ran in Kingston, Sutton and Merton during the latter part of last year. Wandsworth is due to host the training next month, and there are currently two dates available: 9th and 25th February 2009.

For more information about the Mental Health Awareness training please contact Shirley Martin at mhproject@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or (07887) 558894.

For further information about the work of Skills for Care in South West London, please contact Taufiq Hasan (details page 2)'

SOUTH EAST LONDON SUB-REGION

Since its inception, the South East London sub-region has enjoyed a mixed level of employer participation at its working groups, with a core group of particularly interested parties being established.

At the September 2008 working group meetings for Leadership & Management and Recruitment & Retention, the members had a discussion to review the working groups as purposeful forums. It was agreed that the two working groups should be merged to operate as one combined forum with a shared agenda. It was also agreed that future meetings should be themed around topics or issues related to social care staff development and support for managers /owner managers on growing their businesses, using presenters/ guest speakers either from the sector or other related and closely linked sectors.

The first implementation of this discussion took place in December at Lewisham Civic Suite, with a focus on the Skills for Care Leadership and Management projects and publications including current evaluation work commissioned. Pippa Doran, Skills for Care



London lead on Leadership & Management, attended the meeting to speak about the current work that Skills for Care have initiated as well as future developments - in particular the various publications available to support managers at all levels in the sector, to improve and encourage good practice.

Paula King, Recruitment Manager for Southwark Council, gave a presentation on 'Recruitment Law' and illustrated the practical application of the law for employers recruiting staff.

The 'Q & A' based discussions that followed gave further opportunity for employers to explore and gain enhanced information on the topics and other related areas especially

the new Qualifications and Credit Framework. A wide range of views were expressed at the end of the meeting, including those conveyed on evaluation forms, where it was found that overall the employers had a positive experience and would like more of this type of meeting.

The focus in the future for meetings in the sub-region will build on this development in order to encourage more participation from social care employers, especially small and medium sized organisations and stakeholders.

For further information about the work of Skills for Care in South East London, please contact Dupe Pennant (details page 2).

involving people who use services in assessing the communication skills of staff

Rita Ferris Taylor reports on an innovative Skills for Care funded project running in NW London which is helping to improve staff communication skills through the involvement of people who use services.

In 2007, a Skills for Care funded project in North West London looked at extending the involvement of people who use services (PWUS) in staff recruitment and selection. Many of those who took part highlighted the universal importance of good communication in service provision.

This led to the two project managers (Breda Concannon from Ealing Social Services and Rita Ferris-Taylor) identifying the possibility of including people who use services as part of staff training and assessment. The idea was to build on similar skills used in interviewing, such as listening and questioning, to develop service users' skills in giving direct feedback.

The project team worked with 3 different groups of people who use services: one in Brent comprising members from different user groups including learning disability and mental health; and two from Ealing, one of older people and the other people with learning disabilities. Throughout the project the

team worked to the eight main principles developed by Skills for Care for involving PWUS and carers.

Step one: Consultation

The process started with a consultation day for PWUS, who were asked:

- What is important to you about staff communication?
- What are your experiences of 'good' and 'bad' communication from staff?
- How do you know when you are being treated with dignity and respect? (and the reverse?)

Discussions and paired exercises revealed a range of experiences, for example:

'When they really listen and take time to develop a relationship with you, it's wonderful and makes all the difference'

'Sometimes the workers are very rushed and forget to talk to you and this is very off putting'

PWUS were also involved in short interactive communication

exercises with staff and were given support to offer feedback.

Step two: Preparation

A short interactive exercise to carry out with staff, based on the experiences of PWUS, was prepared. For one group the importance of first impressions and first contact was discussed. For the other group the exercise looked at how PWUS could be supported to make small changes in an area of their life.

These exercises were designed to be carried out on a one-to-one basis by PWUS with staff as part of their training or assessment.

Step three: Training

The training covered:

- Practising the exercises using role-play and simulations. This involved emphasising listening and recall skills in order to be able to give specific feedback afterwards
- Principles of giving feedback. This involved well-known principles such as being specific, balancing the

feedback and commenting on things that can be changed. It also involved assertiveness and confidence

- Practising giving and receiving feedback verbally and in writing. Using a simple feedback sheet accompanied by symbols seemed to work effectively, applying the model:

What I thought you did well
What I thought didn't go so well
What you could do differently

- Roles and responsibilities - if people chose to commit to taking part in the staff assessment days, an outline was given of what was expected of them and what they would get in return

Step four: Trying out the exercises for real

In Ealing, this involved an assessment day for staff that had previously taken part in training on communication. There was then a further assessment day with another small group of staff and NVQ assessors, who also acted as observers and supporters.

In Brent, PWUS took part in staff training on communication, carrying out the practical exercise as part of the day and giving staff feedback in a similar way to that outlined above.

Step five: What did people think?

Feedback was gathered from PWUS and staff about their



experiences of the exercise, all of whom thought it had been useful and thought provoking.

Some themes that emerged:

- Some parallels of staff and service users' feelings about doing the exercise: PWUS initially felt anxious but found this wore off as they got more used to doing it. Staff members similarly felt nervous beforehand
- Thinking about the power imbalances involved: PWUS commented how it felt as if 'the boot was on the other foot' and this felt unfamiliar. But they were keen to be thoughtful and responsive to staff and in most cases initially gave very gentle feedback

Staff members experienced some discomfort around the changed roles but many commented how valuable this was.

- Usefulness of direct feedback from PWUS: Staff members felt this was a novel experience and reflected afterwards that we often don't seek direct feedback about our work from PWUS and could incorporate this more into the daily routine. PWUS showed greater capacity to give more detailed, direct and assertive feedback. These skills will become more and more important with the personalisation agenda and the increasing control that PWUS will have over who works with them.

The project work is still evolving and developing and so far has proved useful and exciting.

For further information about this, and other projects in North West London, please contact Sandeep Birk (details on page 2).

NORTH EAST LONDON SUB-REGION

'Planning a personalised workforce' is the title of the North East London event which is to take place on the 18th March 2009 in Stratford.

The event will have an opening address from the London Borough of Hackney on the transformation of the social care agenda and planned local changes. This will be followed by a series of workshops:

- The role and responsibilities of employers in safeguarding adults
- Transforming your workforce - new types of working in action
- Practice Learning – residential home resource pack
- Developing effective leadership and management skills
- MacMillan Trust - what FREE support can be offered to adult social care providers
- Moving forward into dementia care - looking specifically at the new dementia strategy

The event flyer can be downloaded from the North East London page of the Skills for Care London website (www.skillsforcarelondon.org.uk) – please note that this event is open only to employers based in the eight NE London boroughs.



Information Surgery

Following on from the success of last year's information surgery, North East London are planning another to take place on the 28th January 2009. As these are proving popular, further surgeries may be planned – please check the Skills for Care London website & e-Bulletin for updates.

The information surgeries offer employers the opportunity to discuss & obtain advice (on a one-to-one basis) on the following:

- How to access funded NVQ levels 2,3 and 4
- How to access funded Skills for Life courses (Numeracy and Literacy)
- The £1,000 Leadership and Management grant
- The Skills Pledge and the benefits it can offer organisations
- Completion of the National

Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC)

- Skills for Care activities in their sub-region

In addition, the following activities are planned for early 2009:

- Mental health workshops – to take place on 20th & 21st January (please see website & e-Bulletin for future sessions on this topic)
- Transforming social care – voluntary sector workshops – 3rd and 24th March
- Supporting and embedding learning at work workshop – 26th April
- NE Commissioners workshop – April

For further information on any of the above, please contact Cheryl Gregory (contact details page 2) or visit the NE London page on www.skillsforcarelondon.org.uk

NORTH CENTRAL LONDON SUB-REGION

Over the past few months the sub-region has run a series of successful and well-attended workshops around specific themes including funding and supervision. The next workshop took place on the 6th February and focused on how to embed the new Management Induction Standards. In addition to these workshops, the London Borough of Islington (Housing and Adults Social Services) have been commissioned to facilitate and co-ordinate a Coach Mentoring Network for North Central London.

The Coach Mentoring Network will include:

- Partners from statutory, private, voluntary and independent organisations facilitating and receiving Coach Mentoring that is free at the point of delivery
- A Coach Mentoring skills course and an open-learning pack
- Coach Mentors' learning sets – workshops running from January – April 09 (half day and 2 day workshops)
- Email style newsletter to help develop a community of practice

If you would like more



information on the Coach Mentoring Network, please contact Heidi Rossetter – heidi.rossetter@islington.gov.uk.

Downloadable information will be available from the NC London page on the Skills for Care London website within the next few months for those that are unable to attend.

Transforming your workforce conference

On the 5th March, North Central London is holding its annual conference – using skilled actors and training facilitators, interactive scenarios will be presented to explore key issues around the personalisation transformation agenda. The conference will be supported by a series of workshops, including one on the new vetting and barring scheme (safeguarding adults) to be run by the Department of Health.

In addition to the above, the NC sub-region will also be running the following at the start of 2009:

- Mental Health workshop - to look at mental health legislation, deprivation of liberty and best interest assessors – 20th January
- Information surgery on funding and workforce development – 5th February (please see NE London article, p14 for further information on what the surgery will cover)
- Disability Equality workshops – details to be confirmed

For further information on any of the above, please contact either Cheryl Gregory or Marcia Braham (details page 2) or visit the NC London sub-regional page on the Skills for Care London website – www.skillsforcarelondon.org.uk

action learning

– what’s it all about?

Over the past year, Skills for Care London has funded a number of Action Learning Sets across the region with overwhelmingly positive feedback. But just what is Action Learning and why is it becoming such an increasingly popular development tool?



An Action Learning Set is typically made up of a group of 8-10 individuals with a shared common interest/topic, who will meet on a regular basis for an agreed amount of time (usually a day or half a day), often over a period of approximately 6 months.

What are the essentials of Action Learning?

Equality

The process of Action Learning presumes that all set members are equals. An Action Learning Set has no ‘leader’ or ‘expert’ although sometimes there may be a facilitator brought in to help keep the group focussed, and occasionally set members may decide to invite outside knowledge or expertise to a meeting to meet specific needs.

Real Work

All Action Learning is based on some form of real work. This may be the day-to-day work and issues of the members of the set, or it may be some form of special project that each have. They may focus on individual issues, e.g. managing a challenging situation in their

Action Learning has been described as:

“A continuing process of learning and reflection with the support of a group of colleagues, working on real issues ... (it) can achieve improvement and transformation in a wide range of applications and disciplines including professional, training and other contexts.” (McGill & Brockbank 2006)

So what is an Action Learning Set?

Action Learning can be used by employees working at any

level. However, it is ideal for managers who wish to solve critical and complex business problems and learn in the process.

It is a process where peers support each other and learn with and through one another, giving:

- The chance to work on real problems in the real world
- An opportunity to step back and reflect on personal/professional needs with valuable input from peers
- A powerful and effective way for individuals to develop key skills

workplace, or tackle joint projects such as the future transformation of adult social care services.

Styles of Learning

The learning that occurs within the set includes social learning as members of the set work out together new ways of tackling the tasks they face, and bring in their varied past experience. Pooling the experience and knowledge of each individual, together with new insights gained from listening to and questioning set members, creates new knowledge and action.

An added bonus of Action learning is that as a Learning Set's work evolves, members develop skills of collective and individual reflection and peer coaching.

What are the ground rules of Action Learning?

Action Learning Sets become confidential support groups, where individuals feel able to share learning and act as a coach to their peers.

It is therefore necessary to build a forum in which strong relationships develop to enable members to support one another, share knowledge and take an active interest in others' development. In order to do this it is useful to set ground rules at the initial meeting to provide a foundation for success, for example, that all the discussions within the set meeting are confidential and not divulged to anyone outside the set.

If you think you might be interested in either setting up an Action Learning Set in your workplace or would like to join an Action Learning Set in London, Skills for Care London may be able to help you.

The first 2 of 4 case studies focusing on people's experience of Action Learning are included with this issue of Update London. Copies of the main

report, executive summary and an implementation guide will all shortly be available from the SfC London office.

To get involved in Action Learning, e-mail Pippa Doran (details page 2) stating your name, contact details, your job role, where you work and any specific 'issue' you would like to bring to an Action Learning Set

The Skills Pledge – supporting employers to develop a trained workforce

The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leadership of a company or organisation to support all its employees to develop their basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs). The purpose is to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the organisation.

The Skills Pledge derives from The Leitch Report (2006), which highlighted the fact that a more significant, sustained investment is required to develop a skilled workforce.

Any organisation (regardless of size or sector) can sign up to the Pledge. Skills for Care are currently working with the LSC to increase awareness and engagement within the social care sector.

As the Pledge is a voluntary commitment, it does not affect any employment contracts and is therefore easy to implement. It is supported by a wide range of organisations, including unions and Investors in People. A major benefit to signing up is the opportunity to prove that your organisation is placing importance on investing in staff skills.

If you would like to find out more about the Skills Pledge or how your organisation can access free and subsidised training, please contact Alexandra Wicke-Canagalla (details on page 2).

learning disability services; inducting and developing the workforce

Michael Armstrong looks at the new Skills for Care Learning Disability Knowledge Sets and an innovative 'train the trainers' toolkit being developed in London to help embed them in the workplace.

In 2008, Skills for Care launched a suite of Learning Disability Knowledge Sets that offer learners, employers and training providers a collection of key learning outcomes for specific areas of work including the history and context of services, communication, independence and wellbeing.

To download the full set, visit the new national Skills for Care website (www.skillsforcare.org.uk) - the Knowledge Sets can be found in the 'entry to social care' section.

To support the 'Nutrition & Wellbeing' Knowledge Set that was published in 2007, Skills for Care Eastern developed a toolkit for managers, supervisors and trainers that provided facilitators with notes and training materials to support eight half-day workshops. With clear links to qualifications and the emerging credit framework, the resource was very well received.

Skills for Care London commissioned Hasca Ltd to develop an accompanying toolkit for the learning disability sets modelled and linked to the Eastern publication. Last summer, following sub-regional



consultations on content and affiliated resources, feedback suggested that clear guidance on where to find resources, help and support, example material for staff and guidance on user participation, would be welcome additions.

London's 'train the trainers' toolkit

Linking to the North East London sub-regional pilot aimed at promoting the eight Principles for involving people who use services, and carers and improving senior management understanding of good practice, quality checking and new ways of working, the toolkit will offer a suggested structure, which could be applied to any of the five Knowledge Sets or the further four that will be published later this year. With training resources and example activities, it is hoped that the publication (which will be available in March 2009) will provide an enhanced level of underpinning knowledge that complements the Common Induction Standards and

therefore, the Learning Disability Induction award (visit <http://www.ldaf.org.uk/information.html?developments>).

Hasca, in partnership with Social Works Ltd, will be running two regional workshops to support the launch – the toolkit will be available in both print and a suite of downloads, including an introductory presentation, skill scans and delivery plans.

Throughout 2009, Skills for Care London will continue to work in partnership with the regional Valuing People team and local provider networks, to ensure that the five priority areas to have evolved from 'Valuing People Now' integrate with national and regional workforce development strategies and the current reform agenda.

For more information visit http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_093377 or contact Michael Armstrong (details page 2).

Two workshops to launch the toolkit will be held on the 31st March and 2nd April (see back cover for details).

Skills for Care Accolades 2009

Now in its seventh year, the Skills for Care Accolades have become established as one of the most enjoyable and prestigious events on the social care calendar. This year, make a resolution to put yourself forward for recognition.

The Accolades, which celebrate outstanding achievements in workforce development in the social care sector, are now run in partnership with the Department of Health.

In 2008, three London organisations were highly commended in the categories they were nominated for:

- **Westminster City Council - best training provider/ assessment centre & best involvement of people who use services and/or carers in developing staff in social care**
- **Lewisham Voice Training - best involvement of people who use services and/or carers in developing staff in social care**
- **Specialist Eden Alternative Trainers (Royal Borough of Kingston) - most innovative workforce development within new types of working**

All three found being put forward for an Accolade an invaluable experience.

According to Jane Simms from Westminster City Council, "Entering for an Accolade Award means that you have to stand back from your day-to-day work and reflect on what

you are doing. This reflection itself is very helpful. Writing up an entry isn't like writing a novel – you are writing up what you've done. An entry is more work but it isn't new work - it's pulling together what you've already done and completing the Entry Form – which is not that bad – honestly – just have a look!

"How many of you have read an entry and thought, "we do that and more"? This year, why not stop taking yourself for granted, put aside a little time to write up what you are doing and wait for the Accolades!"

Lilian Mowcoomber from Voice Training also found it a worthwhile experience:

"Getting highly recommended makes us proud of the work we do as people with a learning disability. It was good to be up in front of lots of people; we can speak up for people who can't

speak up for themselves. We need to keep breaking down barriers", as did Jan Donnelly, one of the trainers involved in the project: "For me, as someone who has supported the team for a long time, getting highly recommended gave us the boost we needed. We have lots of aspirations and work ambitions and getting recognised by organisations such as Skills for Care is part of fulfilling those dreams".

We are aware that there are many examples of exceptional & innovative work in London, and would urge employers to put themselves forward for an award in order to obtain the recognition they deserve!

Nominations for this year's awards will open on the 2nd March, and the entry form will be available to download from the Skills for Care website (www.skillsforcare.org.uk).



events

February

24th

Skills for Care National Conference - The Great Skills Debate: Maximising Your People's Potential

Hilton Park Lane Hotel, London
The Skills for Care Annual Conference 2009 will allow you to understand the current developments in workforce issues and the challenges that face the sector.

Contact: Pavilion - (0844) 8805061 / info@pavpub.com
£220 + VAT

24th

Developing Skills for a Brighter Future 2009

Lord's Cricket Ground, London
A free employers' conference featuring keynote Speaker Karren Brady. The aim of this conference is to address staff motivation and retention, Apprenticeships, leadership & management training and more. There will also be opportunities for employers to book 1-2-1 appointments with the Train to Gain skills brokers and sign up to the Skills Pledge.

Contact: City & Guilds - londonemployersevent@cityandguilds.com / 020 7294 8139. FREE

25th

Benchmarking the Post Qualifying Awards - a Skills for Care/CWDC Seminar

Hammersmith Town Hall, W6
A seminar for managers in North West London to launch the new Employers' Guide to the Post Qualifying Awards

Contact: Sandeep Birk (details page 2)
FREE

26th

NMDS-SC & London Local Authorities

Great Russell Street Hotel, WC1B
A key event specifically designed to provide advice and guidance on implementing the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) in Local Authorities across the London region. FREE

Contact: John Clegg (details page 2)

26th

Practice Learning Event for NE London Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector Organisations

Express by Holiday Inn, Newbury Park
10am - 1pm (the event will end with lunch)

Skills for Care North East London is working to develop the range and quality of social work practice learning opportunities and to provide resources and support to PVI organisations which currently offer placements to social work students.

Contact: Ali Rusbridge - ali.rusbridge@towerhamlets.gov.uk
FREE

March

5th

North Central London Conference - transforming your workforce to meet the personalisation agenda

Resource Centre, Holloway Road
The conference, which is hosted by Skills for Care London, will give delegates the opportunity to examine and discuss the opportunities arising from the personalisation agenda.

Contact: Cheryl Gregory (details page 2)
FREE

18th

North East London Conference - planning a personalised workforce

Old Town Hall, Stratford, E15
The conference, which is hosted by Skills for Care London, aims to bring together key individuals, organisations and speakers from the sector.

Delegates will be able to learn more about the expectant changes in adult social care and how these will impact current services.

Contact: Cheryl Gregory (details page 2)
FREE

19th

In Control's 'The Big Event'

Islington Design Centre, London
This event is the biggest live showcase for self-directed support in the UK.

Contact: In Control: (0121) 7083031 / admin@in-control.org.uk.
£125 - £175 (£15 for individuals & families)

31st

Learning Disability Knowledge Sets - New Toolkit Launch

Venue to be confirmed
Skills for Care London launch their free toolkit for trainers introducing the new Learning Disability Knowledge Sets. Half day event for care trainers and managers.

Contact: Hasca Ltd - info@hascald.co.uk / 01992 633111
FREE

April

2nd

Learning Disability Knowledge Sets - New Toolkit Launch

Venue to be confirmed

Details as 31st March above