

'We have established a clear way forward with planning for Skills for Life staff training and development '

College, March 2006

'I am now able to make informed recommendations and advise staff on their training and development routes'

Independent training provider,
February 2006

Skills for Life specialist information advice and guidance: a regional service for organisations and individuals

Initial feedback from recipients of London region's training needs analysis consultancy for organisations employing Skills for Life staff suggests the service is effective and worthwhile. With support from pan-London ESF and Skills for Life Quality Initiative (SfLQI) funding, thirty organisations have worked with consultants from the professional development centres to explore the policy context and the national qualifications framework for Skills for Life and to conduct detailed surveys of their staff in order to draw up staff development plans for individuals and the organization as a whole.

This e-briefing highlights aspects of the work of the regional IAG service. The LSU has produced a fuller report, 'London region Skills for Life specialist information, advice and guidance for organisations and for individuals: a case study of a regional approach' in association with the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC).

Why did LSU establish the service?

One of the LSU's earliest aims was to develop a specialist Skills for Life professional development information, advice and guidance (IAG) service for staff and their employing organisations.

The decision was based on three premises:

- information, advice and guidance on Skills for Life teacher qualifications and training routes is essential to ensure that staff are on the most appropriate programmes for their professional development and that resources are used effectively both for the individual and the employing organisation
- advising literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers and their employers on professional development opportunities is complex
- Skills for Life IAG needs to be conducted by those with specialist up-to-date knowledge and information

Estimates from data gathered by CTAD, talent and the LSU in 2004-05 told us that London had well over 5,000 Skills for Life (literacy, numeracy and ESOL) teachers working with 150,000 learners in over 300 organisations. Although there had been substantial progress between 2001 and 2005 towards the Success for All targets for qualifying staff, there still remained a high proportion of teachers without appropriate Skills for Life teaching qualifications. In 2004-05 over 50% of full time and 75% of part-time and agency staff had not completed their initial teacher training (estimates from CTAD, talent and LSU data). The pace of growth in provision had meant that,

although there had been many teachers trained, there were even more who had been recruited and had yet to be trained.

Since 2001 there have been successive changes in Skills for Life teaching qualifications. This, together with the plethora of 'legacy' qualifications held by teachers, has made it particularly difficult for employers to know what training is most appropriate for their staff. For individuals trying to enter or progress their career, the routes can appear even more complex.

In 2004 talent London and several Sfl professional development centres (PDCs) in London were already offering information and advice to individuals on Skills for Life teacher qualifications and training routes. However access was constrained by the geographical locations of the PDCs and the often limited capacity within the centres to provide this service. There was also a small amount of activity to help organisations plan staff development activity to upskill and qualify their staff - Skills for Life staff skills audits or 'training needs analyses' (TNA). Although good practice had developed it had been in an adhoc and uncoordinated way. The LSU set out to develop this early work into a more cohesive regional service.

What are the service objectives?

The LSU, with the guidance of the London IAG expert working group, set a series of service objectives:

1. to develop and pilot a regional model
2. to develop regional capacity to deliver expert IAG and TNA services
3. to ensure effective signposting by general mainstream IAG services and other relevant staff
4. to develop an effective information infrastructure
5. to provide high quality coordinated regional expert service for individual enquirers (face to face, phone and e-services)
6. to offer a high quality responsive expert TNA service for employing organisations
7. to evaluate the effectiveness of the model
8. to disseminate regionally and nationally the lessons learnt from the regional model

What are the key elements of the regional model?

- a customisable skills audit and IAG toolkit, with training materials and guidance notes
- trained, supported and quality assured specialist advisers based with the PDCs to work with individual teachers/trainers/tutors
- an audit of all the TNA work previously conducted to inform development of a range of responsive models for TNA
- trained, supported and quality assured specialist consultants, linked to PDCs to conduct organisational TNAs
- coordinated, managed regional service delivery
- systematic collection of regional intelligence on regional training priorities
- promotion of the service to individuals and employing organisations

Essential to the successful development of the above elements has been a close working relationship between London's PDCs, the LSU and the team of SfLQI facilitators. Equally important has been pan-London ESF and SfLQI funding support, without which the work could not have been accomplished.

What does the training needs analysis work involve?

Coordinated by LSU, London region has conducted a pilot series of training needs analysis consultancies with thirty organisations.

24 specialist consultants in PDCs identified and trained

24 specialist TNA consultants and IAG advisers have participated in a central training programme to ensure they are up to date with developments in professional development, able to use the TNA activities and approaches in a coordinated way, and briefed on quality assurance procedures.

SfLQI facilitators briefed on the regional model

All the SfLQI facilitators were fully briefed on the IAG offer in order to promote it as part of the full support package to providers. Three facilitators took this further and trained as consultants to carry out organisational training needs analyses themselves.

TNA consultancy promoted to organisations through SfLQI facilitators and the 12 largest ESOL providers identified by LSC London region

Organisations were informed of the offer by facilitators and, if interested, completed expressions of interest. PDCs were matched to the individual organisations and responsible for initial contact.

100% of the expressions of interest translated into actual take-up. To ensure linkage with the 3 year regional ESOL strategy of the Regional Skills Partnership the largest 12 ESOL providers were also prioritized.

Systematic collection of regional intelligence on future regional training priorities

On completion of the organisational TNA a summary report identified training needs which has helped inform regional training and workforce development priorities.

What does early evaluation of TNA tell us?

TNA has succeeded in ensuring better, more appropriate take up of SfLQI professional development opportunities, and has also addressed broader issues relating to initial teacher training and continuing professional development. As a consequence of the TNA consultancy the thirty organisations were in a position to make informed Skills for Life staff training and development plans.

TNA consultancy both identified potential training and development routes and prompted organisations to think through their priorities. How did the results of the TNA fit with the organisation's objectives for professional development? Which staff did they wish to prioritise? Where would the training be offered - internally or externally, and what resources (cost of training, release time) would be allocated? Was it possible to produce short, medium and long term training and development plans?

The offer has worked most effectively where organisations were provided with a linked support package, which works as follows:

1. The SfLQI facilitator supports the organisation with drawing up a Skills for Life whole organisation implementation plan and an organisational staff development to support implementation. The facilitator recommends the support of a TNA consultant.
2. The TNA consultant supports the identification of training needs and the drawing up of a Skills for Life staff development plan as part of a whole organisation approach to professionalise the workforce. The TNA consultant links back to the facilitator.
3. A professional development centre, local provider (sometimes the organisation itself) offers a programme of differentiated staff development as part of a targeted and, where relevant, customised regional training offer including both SfLQI and other regional opportunities.

Is the work likely to continue?

Early findings suggest the work is successful and effective. A series of recommendations, summarized below, provides the direction we need for the next three year period of further development and change for teacher training and professional development:

- further develop and strengthen the regional model and the TNA process
- thoroughly evaluate the impact of the work on participating organisations, for example, to identify the extent to which
 - training and development plans are realised
 - training affects teaching and learning, staff expertise, confidence and motivation
 - organisations continue to conduct their own Skills for Life TNA
- disseminate the experience of a number of organisations through a series of case studies
- link the workforce intelligence the work generates more closely with regional workforce development planning
- and build the specialist service into regional planning for the three year London Skills for Life action plans.

For more information on the specialist regional service, contact Howard Moxon at the London QIA SfLQI 2006 continuation project on h.moxon@ioe.ac.uk

Find a copy of this e-briefing and the full London region case study , 'London region Skills for Life specialist information, advice and guidance for organisations and for individuals: a case study of a regional approach' on the LSU section of the Institute of Education website www.ioe.ac.uk

Find a listing of teacher training and professional development opportunities on the courses section of the talent website www.talent.ac.uk

London professional development centres leading the regional service:

South London - SLLP Professional Development Centre – Su Dunsmore
suzanne.dunsmore@prospects.co.uk

Central London - LLU+ at LSBU – Kay McBrien
k.mcbrien@lsbu.ac.uk

East London - talent east professional development centres – Anne McKeown
anne.mckeown@tower.ac.uk

North London - talent north - Cary Whitworth
cary.whitworth@lsc.gov.uk

West London - London West PDC - Paul Cavendish
paul.cavendish@cnwl.ac.uk

For further information
please contact:

Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London
WC1H 0AL

Tel: 020 7612 6516
Fax: 020 7612 6618
Email: lsu@ioe.ac.uk

e-briefing