

Putting quality on a firm footing

Bradford Family Learning Service



Our focus

The Bradford Family Learning Service is a stand-alone unit within Bradford Council. We deliver courses to parents and children in the most deprived areas of Bradford and District, to improve the maths, English and ESOL skills of parents whose skills are at very low levels. We work with partners to deliver free courses in schools, nurseries, Sure Starts, children's centres, community centres and libraries. The courses are flexible, accessible and inclusive, helping family members and carers to support their children's learning.

Our courses

The length of courses varies from 10 hours to 60 hours. Courses over 30 hours are accredited in various ways, including National Tests. Learners are encouraged to use English and maths skills at home and in their everyday lives by using real life scenarios and by taking tasks home to complete or practice.

Our staffing

Staffing of the service consists of a team leader, a quality assurance co-ordinator, a course co-ordinator and five tutors, two of whom are part time. The service also engages 22 freelance tutors in order to fulfil the level of delivery needed to meet the contract targets.

Our learners

Our learners are drawn from areas of multiple deprivation and most lack self confidence and self motivation. The biggest impact we see is how their confidence grows, how they become interested and proactive in their child's learning and how many of them start to engage with school. Many go on to work as volunteers in school.

The challenges facing the organisation:

- the uncertainty of continuity of funding and constant changes in Education Bradford and now Bradford Council
- restricted recruitment policies
- the small size of the service
- lack of quality processes
- paperwork not fit for purpose

Supported provider

Bradford Family Learning:

- Pauline Thorpe, Business and Community Engagement Adviser

Improvement partner

Hull City Council:

- Ruth Braithwaite, Skills for Life Adviser

- difficulties with recruitment of suitable tutors
- collection and interpretation of data
- observation of teaching and learning
- little knowledge of how well we were doing and what we needed to improve

How we have moved forward

With the team leader's role becoming full time and with support from several LSIS programmes, we have made rapid progress. We have undertaken a complete revision of the procedures and processes that make up the learner's journey.

We have also placed a strong emphasis on observations of teaching and learning (OTL). On the next page you will find the flowchart that describes our OTL arrangements.

Impact

- The service is more focussed on quality and quality improvements.
- Team members feel the service is on firmer foundations and there is now consistency in all our processes.
- We are using the new processes and revising them for next year in order to further enhance the learner's journey.
- Individuals are being held more to account for the quality of what they deliver and how this is documented.
- The anticipated impact on learners is that they will get a better experience with a clearer picture of what they are doing, how they are progressing and what they need to do to move on to the next stage.

Next steps

- We are evaluating the changes implemented in 2011/12 to inform improvements for 2012/13.
- Training needs are now easily identified and a programme of training is being implemented
- The qualifications on offer will be revised with the proposed changes to functional skills.
- Recently our data collection system has changed. Further training is required to extract data in a format that can be used to inform planning and self assessment.

The Health Check and resulting support has been the best training that has happened to the Service. The advice and guidance has been invaluable.

Dos and don'ts

- Don't try to struggle on your own. Seek out help and advice.
- Don't underestimate the time it takes to make changes.
- Don't try to change everything at once.
- Don't think once something has been changed it cannot be improved upon.
- Do try to take your tutors with you.
- Seek others' views; there are many sides to one problem
- Do be enthusiastic.



