

## First steps for North West voluntary and community sector

### ELECT, Kirkby Unemployed Centre and Community Information Training Company (CITC) UK



#### Why we needed the programme

ELECT (based in East Liverpool), Kirkby Unemployed Centre in Knowsley and CITC UK on the Wirral all work in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the UK, with a focus on those furthest from the labour market and who are most likely to need help with literacy and numeracy skills.

Supported by new improvement partner South Sefton Development Trust (itself a voluntary organisation), the three organisations were all at different stages of development, but all shared a desire to benchmark their skills against national standards. This would enable them to demonstrate the quality of their provision more easily, to funders and learners alike.

#### Individual priorities, shared expertise

ELECT are an organisation which has traditionally concentrated on business advice and support, with delivery of a range of short courses aimed at helping entrepreneurs take the next step. As they moved across into delivering contracts for colleges as well as local authorities, ELECT recognised the need for their training approach, delivery and outcomes to echo those of the national key skills framework. In their original action plan ELECT's training manager, Christine Kelly, identified the need to "align ELECT's offer with the national standards of the Adult and Community Learning sector. This will mean ELECT develops advantages which will secure it further Skills Funding Agency contracts. By incorporating LSIS best practice it will help strengthen the support and impact for clients".

CITC UK is a small provider working with young people who are furthest from the labour markets, often with no qualifications and low self-esteem. CITC UK work with the young people for up to six months, teaching them life skills (shopping, cooking, communication), as well as more practical skills, with the aim of getting the young people "job ready" or able to return to education at the end of the support. Within their existing vocational provision – which did attract level 1 qualifications – English and maths were included, but in a less formal and less structured way. Where CITC UK looked to LSIS for support was in

#### Supported provider

ELECT; Kirkby Unemployed Centre; CITC UK

#### Improvement partner

South Sefton Development Trust:  
• Cate Murphy, Chief Executive Officer

developing more accurate assessment tools that would focus on maths and English skills in particular, and identify the levels of support needed. It was hoped that the programme would help formalise their current practice.

All three organisations began by benchmarking themselves against the whole organisation approach health check to determine exactly where the LSIS support would be most effective, and to provide a framework for their on-going professional development. As providers new to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, the three organisations chose to come together to share as many of the continuous professional development sessions as they could, to enhance their learning, but also set up a peer support group for their organisations and staff that would go beyond the LSIS English, maths and ESOL programme.

Joint introductory sessions “What is Skills for Life?” and “Embedding LLN – What, Why, How”, a national strategic update session and an introduction to “Assessing Learner Needs” were followed by individual training for each partner carefully tailored to their requirements and priorities.

## Successful outcomes

“The staff were initially sceptical about the training as they could not see the benefit in making changes to our established way of delivery as this had been successful to date. After our first session with LSIS, staff would see straight away that there were additional resources and other training paths open for exploration. Being able to speak with LSIS trainers who specialise in this field has also provided staff with the confidence in knowing that they are delivering training that is appropriate, relevant and fit for purpose.”

- Christine Kelly, Training Manager, ELECT

“We wanted to achieve a better understanding of embedding key skills into our learning programme. We also wanted to include more an active learning element into our programme. To date (August) we have begun to roll out a selection of active learning activities using techniques learnt at our training sessions. We are also now in a stronger position to employ and recognise embedding into our programme of skills.”

- Liz Richards, Training Manager, CITC UK

“We believe that a programme like this should be disseminated as widely as possible throughout the third sector vocational trainers – as it can only have a hugely positive impact on the learners’ experience”.

- Cate Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, South Sefton Development Trust