



NEWSLETTER

In this issue...

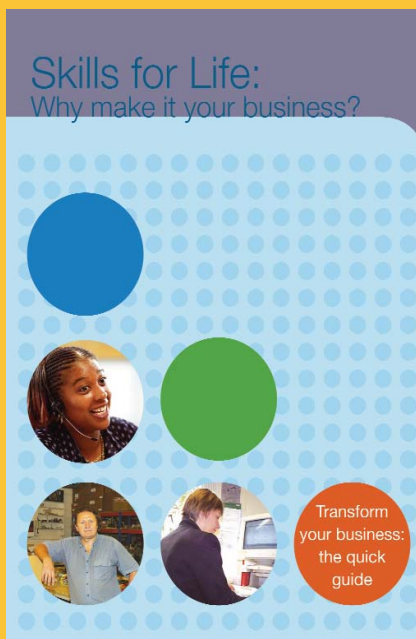
**Find out more about...
the Employers Toolkit**
See below

Feature Case Study
St.Lukes Benchill Manchester
Pages 2 and 3

Investor in Cohesion Toolkit Launch
Page 6

ISSUE 6 - November / December 2004

Editors Forward



Welcome to the November Edition of the Big E Newsletter. This issue introduces Skills for Life: Why make it your business? a revised toolkit which you can use with employers to help their workforces become more productive and their businesses more competitive. It should enable employers to identify and address the literacy and numeracy needs of their staff.

The revised toolkit specifically addresses Skills for Life learning in the workplace. Based on the original employer toolkit, the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit have consulted with stakeholders, employers and Trade Unions to understand what employers need in order to develop workplace skills.

The toolkit is intended to help address issues, face challenges and find solutions to business problems arising from poor literacy and numeracy skills.

'Skills for Life: Why Make it your Business' is made up of four hard-copy sections, a CD-Rom and a video. You can order your free copy from dfes@prolog.uk.com or 0845 60 222 60 quoting Ref: ETKV2-2004.

We have uploaded the briefing sheet and calendar of training events on the website for you to access further details. We will also be delivering some awareness raising sessions at local Skills for Life forum meetings.

You will also find a case study promoting workplace literacy, language and numeracy skills and news of an event in Blackburn with Darwen that launched an innovative workforce development toolkit with embedded literacy, language and numeracy.

Best Wishes

Lin Etheridge

engage encourage entry e-learning equality e-skills for life

I found out about learndirect from a friend, and joining has been the best thing I have ever done.

It has given me new confidence as for many years I have suffered from anxiety and depression, and not been able to work.

Since I started, I have completed various courses, I have surfed the net, learned about emails, and I achieved my level 1 certificate in Literacy, which I am extremely proud of.

Numeracy is the next one I am completing, for which I hope to achieve another certificate. After that I will do the literacy and numeracy level 2.

The atmosphere is so friendly and the tutors are great: so helpful it's a pleasure going. It's basically a no-stress environment.

I have been at St Luke's for the past 12 months. I want to learn as much as possible, and it has really given me something to strive for!
Elaine Jones

I am at present unable to work, due to ill-health. When I did work I looked after children and adults who had learning disabilities. I joined learndirect because I was given a computer and I had no IT skills apart from the very basics, so I felt I needed a good level of understanding of computers that will be acceptable if I return to work.

The courses I have completed have assisted me in using a computer correctly. The centre location is ideal for me due to the nature of my ill-health, which can change quickly over the day.

As the centre is small, it has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The tutors are great and are always on hand to explain no matter how small the problem. I intend to stay at St Luke's learndirect centre as long as I can!
Janet Papworth



FEATURE CASE STUDY - St Luke the Physician



Introduction

The Origins

In an effort to increase the often low uptake of **learndirect Skills for Life** courses in the areas with the highest level of need, the local learndirect hub and Manchester Diocesan Board for Ministry and Society (BMS) sought to investigate whether existing community-based groups could, through local resources and credibility, improve the access to Basic Skills provision.

The Project

A Church building; St Luke's, Benchill, Manchester began working in partnership with the Hub and an established **learndirect** centre to provide **Skills for Life** courses in an area of high need and low uptake

Why use Church Buildings?

It is a particular feature of the Church of England (C of E) that it is universally present in local communities, providing a significant number of Church buildings spread across the conurbation. This means that there is a pre-existing network of possible venues. In addition local Churches are connected, not just with the Church congregation, but also with large numbers of community groups and networks. They have therefore both a physical base and a deep involvement in local communities.

Methodology

Mapping

The Diocesan Board for Ministry & Society has a powerful, desktop PC geographical information system (GIS), Mapinfo. Using the GIS system and information from a variety of sources we were able to identify target areas for the project.

Area Selection Criteria

Data relating to uptake and needs in the area was collated from the **learndirect** Hub, BMS and the Basic Skills Agency combined and used to identify those wards which would be considered as priorities. Wythenshawe was chosen for the pilot due to its clear **Skills for Life** needs, along with low uptake, and the fact that all four wards in the area showed high levels of deprivation.

Method of Provision

On the advice of the Hub it was decided that provision should be made in partnership with an existing **learndirect** centre. The Church would therefore be providing outreach facilities for the Centre. The International Learning Centre, based in Withington, was already keen to provide facilities in the Wythenshawe area and was already searching for premises. Therefore it was chosen as the partner

Identifying the Church

Once the appropriate area had been established the pilot then sought to identify a suitable Church which could offer provision in some way. Having spoken to local clergy St Luke's, Benchill was chosen.

Alan is 22 and saw the learndirect notice board as he drove past St. Luke's. He decided to call in, as he has wanted to do some courses for a while but has been into other centres near where he lives in Stretford and found them too busy. He likes accessing the courses at St. Luke's as he says he finds it "nice and quiet".

He is interested in doing a wide range of the Skills for Life courses due to having the time, as he is unable to work because of illness. He, therefore, sees this time as an opportunity to improve his English, maths and computer skills and says that the Skills for Life courses will help him to widen his work options. He plans to work his way through them all! He is also interested in doing the national literacy and numeracy tests and says that he feels the courses have given him an aim.

Margaret is 56 and from the Wythenshawe area. She has previously done some learndirect courses and when she saw the learndirect notice board outside the church she decided she would like to try some other courses. She likes St. Luke's as it is not like a classroom situation but rather it is somewhere she feels comfortable, as everyone is friendly and welcoming.

Margaret has the time, as she is unable to work due to illness. She aims to undertake a variety of courses and is currently enrolled on 'Surfdirect' and 'Word Skills Check'. She aims to do further courses at St. Luke's and would eventually look at undertaking fee based courses as she finds more of what she likes and enjoys. She says her primary aim in completing the courses is to build her confidence again in her skills and abilities

Anne is 60 and found out about the courses at St. Luke's through seeing a poster and from talking with people in the local community. She has already accessed computer courses with the Adult Education Centre in Wythenshawe town centre. St. Luke's, however, is close to where Anne lives and so is very convenient for her to access the learndirect courses. As she has done some computer courses already she has decided she would like to improve her number skills by completing some of the Skills for Life courses including the 'Number Skills Check' and 'Numbers Direct-Entry Level'.

She aims to continue doing other Skills for Life courses as well as continuing learning computer skills through the Adult Education Service

Church of England Church, Benchill, Manchester

The Church was visited with the proprietor of the International Learning Centre to ensure that it would be suitable.

The music room at the side of the Church was chosen. This is close to the Highway (and the bus stop). It can be accessed directly from outside. In addition it has disabled access and facilities.

Identified Barriers to Participation

A number of barriers have been cited which are preventing individuals from accessing **learndirect Skills for Life Courses**. These have been highlighted through discussions with other agencies, organisations and local people. A number of local people have also answered a learner questionnaire, which asked them what would prevent them from accessing a course and subsequently what would encourage them to enrol

A number of barriers have therefore been identified ranging from those of a practical nature to attitudes and feelings towards learning.

They include:

- Lack of childcare provision as there are many parents (particularly lone parents) living in the area with young children
- Parents are not able to access courses during the school holidays, as they also have older children to look after
- Public transport is not always available or convenient to get to venues
- Cost of public transport
- Individuals do not have the time to access courses, often due to work commitments
- Individuals have had previous 'negative' learning experiences at school, college or with other learning providers
- There is a general apathy towards education and learning in the area
- Many individuals have an initial fear of using a computer



Overall Conclusion

From these case studies and from the statistical data we believe that St Luke's can overcome some of the barriers that were identified:

- St Luke's is visible- learners have seen it directly or have heard of it through the community grapevine
- St Luke's is accessible
 - Physically - it is close to where people live overcoming the transport problem
 - Psychologically - it does not have the negative images of traditional learning environments.

Obviously we have not overcome all the barriers. But it is possible that we will be able to identify solutions for the future. It is possible for example that childcare could be provided in another part of the Church

Contact: **Martin Miller** - Partnership Development Officer - 0161 828 1448

North West Skills for Life Calendar 2004

This calendar aims to give you a central information point on events both locally and in the region. If you would like your event publicised through this calendar, in the newsletter or on the website, please contact our Project Executive, Erica Evans on 01925 661869 or email eevans@ufi.com

You will also find further information on the links below to a variety of Skills for Life training and events.

www.readwriteplus.gov.uk

Events Calendar 2004 for Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit available in the North West newsletter. Follow the North West link.

www.lsc.gov.uk/sflqi/default.html

Professional Development information can be obtained by looking at the LSC's Quality Initiative website.

www.nwpdp.org/train.htm

Skills for Life Professional Development training currently available in the North West

Event	Date	Venue	Who should attend?	For more information....
Cumbria Hub: Product Awareness Training Days	30/11/04 01/12/04 07/12/04	Barrow Whitehaven Kendal	UK online and learndirect centre staff	Contact: Cath Goddard Phone: 07968 051587 Email: catherine.goddard@manchester-enterprises.co.uk
Cumbria Hub: Level 2 Training	18/11/04 (1/2 day) 09/12/04 (1/2 day)	Age Concern Training, Trinity House, Barrow	UK online and learndirect centre staff	Contact: Cath Goddard Phone: 07968 051587 Email: catherine.goddard@manchester-enterprises.co.uk
Sub-Regional Skills for Life Forums	TBC	A forum to be held in each sub region (Venue TBC)	Hub Skills for Life lead and centre staff	Contact: Your area co-ordinator for the Big E project or your Skills for Life lead at the Hub for local information
North West Skills for Life Research Forum	12/11/04	Bolton Community College (Manchester Road Campus)	Researchers, practitioners and potential researchers	Contact: Kathryn James Phone: 01524 593665 Email: kathryn.james@lancaster.ac.uk
2004 DfES/NRDC Skills for Life event	30/11/04	Palace Hotel, Manchester	Adult literacy, language and numeracy practitioners (and others working with offenders or interested in their learning)	Contact: Caroline Banks at Bracken Phone: 0115 947 5666 Email: skills@brackenevents.co.uk
Access Technology Foundation Certificate British Computer Association of the Blind: Free 1 Day course	02/12/04 03/12/04	Salford University	Tutors and support staff from learndirect and UK online centres	Contact: John Lawton (Equality & Diversity Manager, Ufi Ltd) Phone: 0114 291 5455 Email: jlawton@ufi.com (For more info: http://www.bcab.org.uk/btcs/atfc-handout.htm .)



Sharon takes Learner of the Year

Welfare assistant Sharon Riding has been named Kingfisher learndirect Centre's Learner of the Year, after clocking up a mammoth 21 courses in just six months.

The 28-year-old from Newchurch has been studying at the centre to improve her job prospects. The award means she will be up against other learners in Lancashire for a county wide prize.

"I didn't do as well at school in maths and English as I probably should have and I wanted to apply for a job working with children so I knew I would have to do something about it," she says. "I only started in February and I am amazed I have done so well. The courses lead

you to taking the new national certificates in Literacy and Numeracy. The certificates are pitched at the same level as GCSE maths or English.

"I have already passed the literacy course and I am working towards completing the numeracy. "The **learndirect** approach suited me because I could fit the courses in with my work at Newchurch County Primary School. Being able to work one-to-one with my tutors also helped."

Sharon was presented with a bouquet of flowers and bottle of champagne to mark her award as Learner of the Year. Centre manager Sue Clarke said: "Sharon has been an outstanding student and her tutors said she is a joy to work with. I think she is a wonderful example to other people. "**learndirect** offers them a flexible way to pick up qualifications that are recognised by employers everywhere which can enhance career prospects.

*For more information about the Kingfisher **learndirect** courses contact 01706 836000.*

CASE STUDY

Name: **Petronelle Kapemb Moanda**
Age: **40**
Birthplace: **Democratic Republic of Congo**
Family: **5 sisters and 5 brothers**
2 daughters and 1 son
Status: **Single Parent**



After a very turbulent existence in her homeland of Congo, during which time she literally feared for the safety of herself and her family, Petronelle fled to the UK in April 2003.

She knew she had a brother here, Emmanuelle, and although she was unsure of his location, she was confident that she would find him, and he would support her in her new life.

Petronelle finally arrived in Liverpool and was understandably deeply stressed and had become very timid and withdrawn. With the help of her brother Petronelle began to rebuild her life. Emmanuelle was the manager of the ELLIS Outreach Programme run by Liverpool Lighthouse in partnership with the French Congolese Association; and through him Petronelle became aware of the opportunity to improve her English skills and regain her confidence.

After an English Skills Check, Petronelle signed up for the ELLIS Introduction and later on the Middle Mastery.

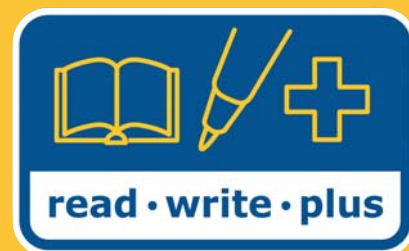
She began to gain confidence being with people in similar situations to herself, mainly due to the fact that Liverpool Lighthouse runs its ELLIS provision in groups. Being part of the group meant that Petronelle started to join in more and felt less lonely. Petronelle soon started to develop her English skills, and the informality and the community setting of Liverpool Lighthouse, as well as the support and guidance from all the staff, had a major impact on Petronelle's confidence.

After successfully completing the ELLIS course, Petronelle then accessed other services within Lighthouse and started gaining more skills such as CV writing

and Job Interviewing. She also took part in a work placement at Marks & Spencer, and then returned to Lighthouse as a volunteer admin assistant.

After further study, including 2 NVQ's, Petronelle eventually found herself at Bethel House, parent company of Lighthouse as an Admin Assistant. It was during her stay there that her Leave to Remain in the UK was granted and she was later able to accept an offer of a part time job at Bethel House.

Petronelle hopes that one day she will be offered full time work somewhere which will then enable her to begin the long journey of trying to get her relatives over to the UK to make her family whole again. She is happy to continue her education here saying, "Learning is a key for wise folk... Learning never ends". "It's because of learning that I am able to do what I have done".



The **BIG E** Team

Linda Etheridge
The **BIG E** Project Manager
07899 064191

Allison Cordner
Project Co-ordinator
Cheshire/Warrington
07780 764144

Suzanne Everitt
Project Co-ordinator
Greater Manchester
07867 500673

Erica Evans
Project Executive/PA
01925 661869

To be confirmed
Project Co-ordinator
Lancashire
01925 661869

Anna Harrison-Scott
Project Co-ordinator
Greater Merseyside
07887 626148

Peter Routledge
Project Co-ordinator
Cumbria
07899 064179

Don't forget the **Big E** Website

The **Big E** website is a resource available for YOU as a main source of information and advice on all aspects of engaging learners.

And **REMEMBER** when you register on the site you will be given access to an exclusive set of documents to help you engage 'hard to reach' learners.

Your feedback on the content of this site is vital to its success! Please let us know what you think, by emailing your comments to info@bige.org.uk

www.bige.org.uk

Blackburn with Darwen: Supporting Community Cohesion in the Workplace

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council wanted to explore how local businesses could put into practice the principles they had signed up to in the "Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen" campaign. In partnership with TUC Learning Services, they began working with trade unions and North West employers to raise awareness of cultures and communities in the workplace.

The project addressed issues around cultural awareness, positive action, equal access, breaking down workplace stereotypes, building an inclusive workforce and establishing professional and social networks contributing to local community cohesion. Training was targeted at supporting union representatives to develop cohesive workplaces in collaboration with employers.

A number of packages were developed and brought together into a toolkit outlining the important role which employers and **Skills for Life** can play in developing community cohesion through the workplace. The toolkit emphasises evidence which shows that cohesive workplaces both enhance the potential and achievement of the businesses involved and have a positive effect of the community from which employees are drawn. It is expected to be particularly useful in workplaces which do not have systems or training in place to ensure equality of opportunity and where cultural and faith differences and divisions would benefit from being identified and addressed.

It sets out statutory requirements on employers in ensuring respect for diversity and equality of opportunity and draws their attention to some of the national initiatives on community cohesion and race equality. It suggests an 'Investor in Cohesion' award, sets out criteria against which businesses can measure their success and includes written and tested material for training and staff development in relation to community cohesion and valuing diversity.

To launch the toolkit, Blackburn with Darwen held an event for over 650 employers and 50 business support and workforce development providers. This was an excellent opportunity for local authorities to establishing working and business links.

The event highlighted:

- The need for community cohesion against a background of identifiably fraught and fragmented communities.
- Community cohesion can be promoted and developed in workplaces where employees of different cultures and backgrounds are already together, sharing common aims and working towards common solutions.
- The synergy between statutory requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and the benefits of community cohesion for the workplace.
- The advantages in terms of increased performance and productivity identified by employers who have risen to the challenge of facilitating the delivery of **Skills for Life** programme through upskilling their workforce and actively contributing to community cohesion in their surrounding area.

For more information, please contact:

Hamid Patel, Workforce Development Manager - 01254 841 057
hamid.patel@blackburn.gov.uk

