

Case Study: Collecting and collating information in preparation to support the learner and their learning programme.

'Assessment and learning: involving the learner'. LSC funded project.



The context:

Learning First is a charity based in Newbiggin Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne. It delivers educational programmes with qualification outcomes predominantly to adult learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LDD), also to learners with mental health issues.

Learning First recognises that those adults have an equal right to receive high quality education and training as accessed by their peers who do not have LDD or mental health issues.

Teaching staff currently deliver both vocational and academic programmes from entry level 1 to level 2, supported by a range of awarding bodies. They teach in many venues in Newcastle, Westerhope, Middlesbrough and Stockton in partnership with colleges and other teaching organisations. Other learners, many of whom have mental health issues are taught in hospital settings in the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear areas. We also currently independently deliver professional development courses up to level 2 in school settings.

The challenge:

To collect, collate and disseminate information efficiently in order to inform and support a personalised learning experience for each learner, to share information as it is gathered between teaching staff and standardise targets about each learner thus reinforcing learning in a range of subject areas and settings. This information will identify prior learning and prevent repetition of courses and achievements thereby informing realistic progression opportunities.

What we did:

- Discussed with administrative staff, in particular staff who input information into the management information system (MIS) to identify how information can be assimilated and filed so that it will become accessible to all staff who will need it in order to inform teaching and planning and make informed judgements about personalised learning.

- Discussed with our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team, where information collected from initial and subsequent interviews will be stored so that it will be accessible to teaching staff that will need to access it.
- Arranged a staff meeting in order to share common information and experiences about individual learners who follow more than one programme.
- Requested that tutors use the intranet to input information about learners as it is collected (including ILP information, goals, enrichment, and achievements). Passwords have been added to the system and learners are identified by initial letters. Sensitive information is stored in locked files.


The outcomes:

In order to begin to streamline the current system of gathering information we had to:

- Ensure that all information collected by staff in our IAG team from initial and follow up interviews is easily accessible to tutors.
- Utilise a working space for tutors with internet and intranet access that they could access information when needed.
- Allocate a personal email and login for each tutor in order to gain that access.

The impact:

- Teaching staff share past and current information about learners, discussing best practice, learners' experiences and using that information to build on positive learning experiences.
- This information can be shared and identified on Individual Learning Programmes (ILPs). Staff can support and reinforce some of the same learning goals for individual students in different teaching and learning programmes and environments.
- MIS administration assistant is currently linking all available information about each individual learner to a single information file about that learner.
- Information will be stored centrally in the administration department and will be electronically accessible to tutors.
- Information about learners who will progress in 2010 will be immediately available.
- The IAG team will be expanded to ensure that information about new learners will be added to the system (initial interview and assessment) and that prior learning will be explored and identified through contact with agencies, colleges, training providers etc.
- The learners can fulfill their full potential as they are supported to make choices and plan for the future.

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