

## Staffordshire County Council and Care Match

# Life Story Books

This project offered training courses: activity coordinators and presentation course. CareMatch have worked with the Adult and Community Learning Team within Staffordshire County Council to look at cost effective delivery of training, using funding available through adult learning provision. The courses will be offered to Personal Assistants to develop their skills when working with individual employers.

### Background

Staffordshire County Council serves a population of 850,000 people, delivering a wide range of vital services to all the communities. They encourage people to take responsibility for their own community, and work together to improve it, impacting on people's health and wellbeing.

Staffordshire County Council and CareMatch have worked together to address a cost effective delivery of training, using funding available through adult learning provision. The courses will be offered to Personal Assistants to develop their skills when working with direct employers.

### What we wanted to achieve

One of the main aims of this project was to get up to 40 staff from private, independent and voluntary sector residential homes in the county trained and

equipped with the necessary skills to produce an electronic life story book.

The project focused on encouraged activity coordinators to become "champions" to disseminate information to the colleagues and other staff in the wider activity coordinator support group network, as well as increasing IT skills (which staff can transfer and develop in providing meaningful activities in the workplace e.g. producing posters, newsletters and encouraging and enabling residents to use IT equipment). In addition, the project will deliver one day courses to activity coordinators and a 2 day Presentation Course.

Each delegate will also receive a pack of resources (folders/paper and a USB data stick) to take back to their service areas and develop 6 life story books. They will be encouraged to disseminate this learning to other team members using the tools and confidence gained from the mentoring/presentation course.

### What we did

This project outlined an improvement in person centred care as the individual user of the service is seen as themselves and not defined by their condition or circumstances

A several training activities were undertaken including:

- promoting the positive relationships between residents, relatives, friends and other staff and professionals
- Enhanced communication skills

- Opportunity given to attend a further short course in presentation skills/mentoring to assist in developing confidence in working in small groups, presenting information and disseminating training to others to develop the full staff team and also users of the service
- Activity coordinator meetings held to look at need and how the training met the establishments requirements
- Development of the meaningful activities with residents (producing posters, newsletters and encouraging and enabling residents to use IT equipment) in the workplace can reduced the need for anti-psychotic medicines meaningful activities

Towards the end of the project all participants of this course developed a 6 life story books enabling them to share their memories with family, friends and others.

Evaluation highlighted that the appropriate training for the social care sector has been developed because of working in partnership with an adult and community learning.

“ This has given me the confidence to use the computer in creating a life story ”

Shirley Rourke, Doddlespool Hall.

## What we achieved

Participants who took part in the mentoring/presentation course will be encouraged to disseminate this learning to other team members using the tools and confidence gained.

Adult community learning opportunities were promoted enabling carers access the affordable training based in their local community Improvement of the new IT skills benefited in new careers opportunities for people.

This training enabled access new funding streams and encouraged/promoted the use of adult

community learning and is local community based and easily accessible.

New learning skills gained, including those related to development of resources such as the life story books.

The working partnership have developed in many learning areas as IT, literacy and numeracy, basic cooking skills, self-development.

## What we learnt

The main challenge was finding the venues with enough computers that are community based, accessible and not expensive. We were lucky to find some local libraries that had enough terminals and a couple of other community venues. This however did limit some of the numbers that were able to attend on each date.

The various levels of IT knowledge and competence could have caused some problems, however this is where the choice of tutor was proven to be essential. Adult and Community Learning had a range of tutors who delivered basic IT training, however one also had a background in social care and therefore was able to show an understanding as to the subject matter. Also they were experienced in understanding the varying levels of IT knowledge and adapt their style and support to each person as and when it was needed.

The challenges moving on from this, are that establishments support the activity coordinators to continue this work when they return and also that they have the resources (computers) to do so. However this was addressed initially with managers etc when first advertised and we understand that all should have had access on their return.

“ The course was informative and enabled me to look at life stories in a different way ”

Jan Buckley, Lawton Rise

## For more information please contact

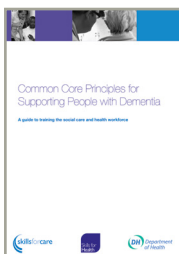
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## Skills for Care Recommends

From activity provision and dementia qualifications to associated guidance, Skills for Care produces various resources to strengthen care worker skills and enable better care provision.

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### Common Core Principles for supporting people with Dementia



We have produced a guide which supports the social care and health workforce to care for

people with dementia. Employers should use the principles as part of their development plans to improve the experience of those with dementia and their carers.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/  
dementia](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia)

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