

Recipient of the
Workforce Development
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learn
from others

The Westminster Society and The Smart Enterprise

Train The Trainers - the development and delivery of a training programme for people with learning disabilities to become employed trainers

People with learning disabilities are experts-by experience and have a valuable role in training a social care workforce who are respectful, compassionate and able to offer personalised services. Overall we wanted to improve meaningful inclusion for people with learning disabilities in the delivery of training, and to enhance the staff training to facilitate greater levels of insight, awareness of disability, personalisation, respect, inclusion and dignity. This case study explains what we did and what we achieved.

Westminster Society and the Smart Enterprise established a cohort of professional learning disabled trainers who translate their personal experiences into high-impact training sessions for care workers.

The Westminster Society is a registered charity supporting more than 300 adults with learning disabilities and their families in Westminster, Camden, Kensington and Chelsea. They provide access to accommodation, respite and outreach services. They have more than 400 employees with continuous recruitment and training offered in-house.

The Westminster Society delivers on average three to four staff training sessions a week on inductions, and also service-specific topics including autism awareness. The Society's recruitment process and training includes people

with learning disabilities and was successful in winning the Skills for Care Accolade for best recruitment practices and winner of winners in 2013.

However they felt there was room for improvement in utilising more people with learning disabilities, with more regularity and diversity. Also, through consultation they had established that there was a clear wish from people with learning disabilities to take more formal roles in training. The Society's training manager had reported that when training included people with learning disabilities there was a much more positive impact in giving staff an understanding of the people they support and how they would like to be supported.

The Smart Enterprise is a small social enterprise based in Surrey which delivers training on

disability issues and employs nine people with learning disabilities as expert trainers. They had demonstrated their effectiveness in delivering co-produced training, and won the Skills for Care Accolade for best provider of learning and development in 2014. It became clear there was a shared vision, shared values, and a shared commitment to delivering the project continuing its legacy.

What we wanted to achieve

The specific aims of the project were to:

- recruit six people with learning disabilities to be trainers
- allocate a non-learning-disabled buddy/mentor for each trainer
- train this group of 12 people in how to co-deliver training
- understand the training topics that people we support want to deliver
- develop training resources for a 'train the trainer' programme to extend the impact beyond the scope of the project.

Overall we wanted to improve meaningful inclusion for people with learning disabilities in the delivery of training, and to enhance the staff training to facilitate greater levels of insight, awareness of disability, personalisation, respect, inclusion and dignity. We wanted to emphasise that people with learning disabilities are experts by experience and have a powerful part to play in training a compassionate and capable workforce.

We wanted to establish a cohort of professional learning disabled trainers who can provide training to other organisations, as a social enterprise developing their employability and reach. Ultimately we wanted to improve the quality of life for people who receive care and support.

What we did

The Society created a job description and a person specification, linking the application for the course programme with the application for employment. The opportunity was advertised and 11 people were interviewed against the following selection criteria: good communication skills with appropriate support, ability to listen, interest and motivation, person-centred

values, commitment to attend all six events, timekeeping, and presentation. From this, six people were recruited.

Completion of the course was subject to assessment of training preparation, timekeeping, participation and training delivery. To help with this each of the recruits was allocated a buddy who was someone from their support team, either a manager who had completed their own train-the-trainer programme, or an experienced support worker. The pairs were matched by existing relationships and shared interests. The Society also appointed two managers to coordinate the project who were present for some of the sessions. They were able to step in and support members of the group if their buddy was not available.

The Society identified and booked dates, times and venues (in house) and managed communications with the participants.

The Smart Enterprise developed a six week programme which was delivered by trainers with learning disabilities. Throughout the course, there was ongoing feedback, evaluation, and application of lessons learned to create a continuous improvement cycle. The participants and trainers co-developed three resources:

- top ten tips for trainers recruiting people with learning disabilities
- trainer workbook for people with learning disabilities
- top ten tips for trainers with learning disabilities.

The graduation event included each participant delivering a ten-minute training presentation.

What we achieved



I found their approach really inspiring, particularly their passion for enabling people with learning disabilities. It was clearly why they got into it in the first place and you could feed off their enthusiasm and 'can do' approach.

Training course attendee



All six people with learning disabilities graduated with their buddies, and are now employees who deliver staff training.

The new trainers are paid at the same rate as sessional trainers and can also be contracted to deliver training to other organisations.

To date we have identified the following existing in-house courses where we utilise each new trainer's skills and interests:

- moving and handling (safe use of wheelchairs)
- understanding mental health
- PROACT-SCIPr-UK (Positive Range of Options to Avoid Crisis and use Therapy and Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention)
- induction: person-centred working, role of the worker and communication.

We successfully tested and refined the 'buddy' model, and developed an effective programme which could be delivered by any organisation who offer in-house training.

What we learnt

One of the biggest challenges was finding the right buddies, however these partnerships were essential and it was critical to find the right buddy with the right skills and commitment to the person and the programme.

The prospect of future employment was a significant driver for the participants and was crucial the programme's success.

The project was reviewed by the members throughout the programme with feedback sessions after each training day. This meant we could refine and adapt the programme delivery, for example, the participants found it difficult to maintain concentration in the afternoons. So the afternoon periods were shortened, and each trainee and buddy were given homework to complete before the next session. This responsiveness to the needs and behaviours of the participants, and the flexibility to adapt on the go, were critical factors.

Use of the Smart Enterprise's existing skills and expertise with Westminster Society's resources and contacts was key to the programme's success.

This project addressed the 2015/16 priority on:

Projects that model approaches to developing a workforce with the skills necessary to provide improved person-centred care and support through multi-disciplinary working.

For more information please visit:

www.wspld.org.uk

www.thesmartenterprise.co.uk

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Skills for Care recommends

Skills for Care produces a wide range of products and services related to recruitment, learning and development and learning disabilities.

Recruitment and retention

Our Finding and Keeping workers online resource groups resources to help employers recruit and retain the right staff.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/randr

Learning and development

From initial induction through to continuing professional development, this section helps understand what is available.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/learning

Learning disabilities

This section of our website includes advice and guidance for organisations caring for people with learning disabilities.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/learningdisability

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