

Case Study

Business Interchange in the North East

In November 2007 STAR started work on Lifelong Learning UK's (LLUK's) highly successful Business Interchange Pilot in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and Humberside areas. This programme aimed to ensure that teachers, trainers and tutors working in further education had the skills and expertise to meet the needs of their sector by placing them back into industry to give them an up-to-date perspective of the subjects that they teach.

In a bid to ensure that the skills of their tutors were current, New College Durham was one of the first training providers to express an interest in the programme. The college sent 9 members of staff out on industry awareness visits, ranging over 3-5 days.

Construction lecturers Richard and Bryan Byers both expressed an interest in doing a placement with Durham County Council so a meeting with Business Managers (Highways Design and Contracts & Structures) Harris Harvey and Mike Ford was arranged by STAR advisor Sheila Craggs.

The Council showed great interest in the programme and shortly after this, agreed to host the two lecturers, each for a 5 day industry awareness visit. During their placement, the two lecturers benefitted from several site visits which involved new bridge and highway construction and were also given literature to use during their lectures.

Both lecturers enjoyed their week greatly and felt that they came away with an increased knowledge of construction. Sharon Bennett, Staff Development Officer at the college said:

'Both lecturers were on a 'high' when they returned to work and this greatly increased the morale of the department.'

For Hartlepool College Lecturer Mandy Sissons, the Business Interchange programme was a great way of developing her skills and updating her knowledge.

Hartlepool FE College was also one of the first colleges in the North East to show an interest in the programme and nominated 7 members of staff to do a mixture of short placements and exchanges. Mandy, a former hairdresser turned lecturer elected a salon in Hartlepool called 'The Barber Shop' as her host. 'The Barber Shop' is a 'men only' salon which concentrates on razor cutting and shaving.

When visited, during her placement by the advisor assigned to her, Mandy commented:

'I have really enjoyed the week and am grateful to have had the opportunity to update my skills in men's hairdressing. I can now pass this on to my students.'

For more information regarding this project please contact STAR using the details below.

