

The Integrated Skills Brokerage for the Public Sector Services is a support service funded by Yorkshire Forward. The service offers public sector organisations independent advice and guidance in undertaking a training needs analysis, sourcing training provision and possible funding for training.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council first got in touch with the Service in April 2008. Mike Gill from Education Contract Services (now part of Facilities Management) initially contacted the service in the hope that a comprehensive learning programme for staff could be developed.

Mike, along with his colleagues had identified several issues within the catering and cleaning departments that could possibly have further ramifications throughout other areas of the Council:

- A large number of manual grade employees whose command of the English language was not sufficient to adequately meet the full requirements of their job roles.
- An ageing workforce of supervisors and middle managers, specifically within school catering, and no staff coming through the ranks capable of stepping up to fill these positions.
- A high proportion of supervisors and middle managers who had received no formal supervisory or management training and although in positions of responsibility over other staff did not have the requisite skills to manage or supervise those staff effectively.



STAR's Senior Business Consultant Lee Reddington was assigned to the authority as a Skills Broker. From an initial meeting with Mike it was identified that in varying degrees these issues applied to over 2000 members of staff within Facilities Management.

Lee suggested a number of approaches to these problems. This included setting up a service level agreement with a group of providers who would be able to address the problems identified through a combination of training programmes. These training programmes included Literacy and Numeracy training, NVQ Level 2 Team Leader, NVQ Level 3 First Line Manager, NVQ Levels 2 & 3 Customer Service, and NVQ Levels 2 & 3 Business Improvement Techniques.

All of these training programmes (depending upon individual eligibility) are capable of being fully

# Case Study

## Upskilling in Bradford Metropolitan District Council

funded through Train to Gain and Skills for Life funding. It was agreed at this stage that Lee would identify potential training providers and introduce them to the Council. Discussions could then be held around how training would be delivered and identified with the prospective providers and attitudes towards partnership working could be assessed.

Whilst at a Local Government Yorkshire & Humber partnership (LGYH) meeting, Lee came into contact with Gill Charlesworth. As Human Resources Business Manager at Bradford Council, Gill was responsible for the authority's corporate approach to the Skills Pledge. Lee updated Gill on the work already underway and suggested a meeting between Gill and Mike Gill to share ideas and to jointly look at the prospective providers.

Over a period of several months providers were introduced to and interviewed by Mike and Gill and six providers were chosen to deliver all programmes.

During the following months Bradford Council signed the Skills Pledge and held an event incorporating all six providers to plan the promotion and implementation of the skills strategy. A service level agreement was signed with all six partners and with the help of Val Priestley (Human Resources Officer - Bradford Council) each provider was assigned with a directorate to target.

Regular provider group meetings were arranged where any problems could be raised and workload could be shared. This process has so far generated over 1800 learner referrals.

Regarding this process Trevor Cox, Managing Director of Phoenix Training Services stated:

*'I would like to thank the Brokerage Service for the effective contribution they have brought to the Bradford Council project. As there are 6 organisations delivering in this project, their comments and actions have assisted to ensure that all parties have had an equal and fair input to accessing the training opportunities. I also feel it has been invaluable that the Brokerage Service has been able to liaise with the funders directly and respond to the forum with their responses, very speedily. I therefore confirm that I feel that their services as a Broker to this project, has enabled it to be a success and would have no hesitation in recommending their services to other providers.'*

Further learners have been identified and are currently awaiting funding. STAR continues to work with the Council and the Providers in order to continue progress.

On the overall service provided by STAR, Mike Gill commented:

*'We have been more than happy with the help and support received from STAR and in particular STAR's representative, Lee Reddington. We are particularly pleased with the way the service was tailored to our needs and the way organisations which fitted with our goals were introduced to us. In short a very professional service.'*

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