

Developing learning and skills opportunities for learners with mental health conditions



Rationale

LSIS wants to promote better learning and skills opportunities for learners with mental health conditions. In 2010 we worked with a number of providers to support the development of their work with specific groups of learners with mental health conditions and we also looked at progression pathways. This was very useful work that yielded some positive outcomes for providers and learners, but it also highlighted some common themes and issues across all the projects. It showed that practitioners often have a high level of understanding and knowledge about how to create good teaching and learning opportunities for people with mental health conditions, but often lacked the awareness and skills about how to develop that provision further. The projects showed that practitioners often felt challenged by how to tackle organisational barriers that learners identified, how to build and sustain partnerships outside of their organisation, how to 'win over' other staff in their organisations so that learners were better supported to achieve and how to develop better progression routes for their learners. This year we want to work with providers to continue to develop provision by ensuring that practitioners have the wider skills and understanding to be able to develop learning opportunities in the FE and skills sector and to apply this to particular learners groups, in this case learners with mental health conditions. This project is an action learning project and will appeal to practitioners and managers who identify with the project findings from last year and see that within their own organisation there are still challenges to supporting learners with mental health conditions to succeed in learning and achieve their full potential. This project is about developing and piloting work that forms the basis of professional development opportunities for staff that work in the FE and skills sector who work with learners with mental health conditions. To apply, you will have in mind an idea to develop your provision from which you will formulate an action plan. The funding will be to enable you to take that action plan forward. The LSIS associate will help you to identify areas for your own professional development that will maximise the success of your action plan and help you seek out that support.

Project outline

LSIS will make available a grant of £3250 to 6 providers from the FE and skills sector. We want providers to use the funding to:

1. Attend a project briefing day and leadership workshop. This day will be held in London or Coventry and will provide an opportunity to discuss the project, meet and network with other project participants from other providers and get involved in a short leadership workshop. This is a mandatory part of the project.

2. Develop and work to an action plan that seeks to help you as a practitioner develop skills and understanding in two areas of programme or curriculum development;
 - Understanding funding and planning e.g. by working with your Finance Director and staff
 - Networking and partnership working, particularly within your own organisation e.g. working with other curriculum teams
3. Work with the LSIS associate to produce a case study of the work you have done and provide feedback to the associate on your own learning and development that has happened as a result of your involvement in the project. The role of the associate is to bring all the projects together, provide on-going support and produce a final report for LSIS
4. Attend a Share and Learn event in order to showcase your work, learn from other providers and discuss the overall impact of the projects. This is also a mandatory part of the project.
5. This project will be linked to the [NIACE MHFE website](#). Project participants will need to register with the MHFE website and will be encouraged to make good use of the resources available. Similarly you may wish to register with the LSIS Leadership Learning Environment [LSIS Leadership Learning Environment](#) and make use of free resources available to support your work and participation in this project. The reports generated by this project will be made available on the NIACE MHFE and also on the LSIS Excellence Gateway.

Eligibility

Grants are offered to providers from the Learning and Skills sector that are funded through the Skills Funding Agency.

What do learning and skills providers need to do now?

The attached application form should be completed and sent to equalities@lsis.org.uk by 5 pm on Tuesday 25th October 2011. A response outlining whether you have been successful will be sent from LSIS by 5pm on Friday 4th November 2011.

Please ensure that you build into your projects travel and subsistence to attend the briefing day and leadership workshop in week commencing 21st November 10am- 4pm at LSIS, Coventry and the Share and Learn event in March 2012

