

Flexible Models of Delivery: Introduction to the Case Studies

In 2007/8, 25 Further Education sector organisations took part in a Skills for Life Improvement Programme project investigating ways of making their Skills for Life offer more flexible. They wanted to respond better to their learners' needs, whether these learners were employees studying in the workplace or those who couldn't always attend their regular classes.

Many of the organisations were looking at ways to develop blended learning approaches, making better use of IT-based learning both within taught classes and for learning at a distance. Others were looking at different flexibilities of delivery: in the workplace, one-to-one, via a drop-in workshop and so on.

All providers were engaging with the reality that the degree of flexibility is funding constrained and has therefore to be limited by parameters such as the time spent on training staff and developing materials; the size of the teaching group; the travel distance between the base and delivery point; the reasonable caseload of learners for a tutor to support at a distance.

The learning from the project as a whole is described in the report 'Developing Models of Flexible Delivery of Skills for Life Provision'

<http://www.sflip.org.uk/resources/modelsofflexibledelivery.aspx>

The project also produced a very useful interactive spreadsheet to help providers model the cost of various types of delivery in relation to what income they would generate. This is available for downloading as above.

The following case studies of six organisations involved in the project describe what they did and what they learnt about making their provision more flexible including some useful advice for others:

1. Northern College: making the most of learning through IT
2. Longden Training: a flexible numeracy programme
3. South Birmingham College: flexible workshops for Train to Gain
4. Oxford and Cherwell College: developing a VLE
5. Wirral Metropolitan College: developing a VLE
6. BUCAM and Jaguar/Landrover: embedding Skills for Life in company training