

Action in West London

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Learning Resource Centre

Action Acton is a registered charity, a Development Trust and aspiring 'community anchor' organisation delivering a range of community, economic and business initiatives. Its agenda is to promote community and economic regeneration in Acton and surrounding areas of West London.

Key challenges

Employment and education support is central to all our activities and Skills for Life is central to employment and education. Having Skills for Life at the heart of all our operations would benefit our clients and, with Skills for Life embedded in all our procedures (for example appraisals and CPD), also our workforce, through opportunities to upskill. Moreover, Skills for Life could also serve to link the different teams, leading to improved cross-team communication and a more coherent service. The Whole Organisation Approach (WOA) activity offered through the Skills for Life Improvement Programme (SfLIP) provided a solution to this challenge. Having discussed all the pros and cons of being involved in the programme with the chief executive, and having established his commitment to a WOA, we decided to sign up.

Progress to date

The programme combines cluster group meetings with individual meetings with the SfLIP development adviser (DA) and both have proved very useful. The cluster meetings provided excellent opportunities for discussing progress and



The team at Action Acton

sharing good practice with other providers. Individual meetings offered personalised support based on the provider's needs and expectations.

At the first individual meeting with the DA we completed a Health Check identifying our strengths and weaknesses and agreed that our best way forward would be to have an all-encompassing 'Skills for Life policy and strategy'. At the second meeting, we were unsure where our focus should be: on the Learning Centre only or the WOA.

The final draft of the strategy now encompasses the WOA but the action plan contains very manageable objectives that I feel comfortable with. Some of these are listed below:

- All staff are aware of the Skills for Life Policy.
- All staff have met the National Standards for Literacy, Language, and Numeracy (LLN).
- All Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) staff and key workers are aware of Core Curriculum levels and are able to advise clients on the appropriate level of LLN or vocational courses.
- All learners are advised on appropriate progression routes.
- Skills Checks are being piloted with IAG staff.

- Yearly appraisal documents will include Skills for Life training needs.

Impact and staff response

With all staff implementing the Skills for Life strategy we will not be waiting long for the results. Already Action Acton staff outside the Learning Resource Centre are involved in Skills for Life quality improvement initiatives. The opportunities and support provided by the SfLIP will increase the anticipated impact on staff and clients.

The programme's expert advice has helped us to develop a quality system that has been successfully implemented. The ongoing support from the DA has enabled me to launch our Skills for Life strategy and we will participate in the programme again next year.

Recommendations

- I recommend the programme to providers who are thinking about improving their quality processes.
- It's important to gain endorsement and support from senior management and board members.
- It's important to engage all staff in the process so they realise the contribution they can make to quality improvement.