



## Update on training and education initiatives for the voluntary sector in Wales

July 2007

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### Update on Sector Skills Councils activity (SSCs) in Wales

#### *SkillsActive*

SkillsActive (the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning) *Annual report* for 2005-2006 is available on their website:

[www.skillsactive.com/resources/publications/SkillsActive\\_Annual\\_Report\\_0506.pdf](http://www.skillsactive.com/resources/publications/SkillsActive_Annual_Report_0506.pdf).

To discuss the work of SkillsActive contact Richard Tobutt, SkillsActive Manager (Wales) on 029 2064 4526 or email [richard.tobutt@skillsactive.com](mailto:richard.tobutt@skillsactive.com)

#### *Skills for Health*

The Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) for the health sector is a major initiative being undertaken by Skills for Health which follows on from the work of the Sector Skills Agreement stages 1-3.

This strategy will outline the vision for the future of vocational qualifications and learning needed by health sector employers for their existing and future employees. At this time Skills for Health will not be including Higher Education as part of the SQS but they will ensure that the SQS supports the concept of skills escalation and progression into HE. The SQS will be used by Skills for Health, the qualifications regulatory authorities and to produce demand-led awarding body provision of qualifications for the health sector in the future.

The SQS project will involve a programme of review, rationalisation and improvement of the qualifications available to the health sector. Consultation and engagement of health sector employers and other stakeholders in all four UK nations involved in qualifications development, regulation, policy and delivery is essential.

Employer consultation events took place during June 2007 and an on-line consultation will be available during July and August 2007.

For further info [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/awards-and-qualifications/sector-qualification-strategy](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/awards-and-qualifications/sector-qualification-strategy)

## **News from Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS)**

The Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) has now become The Department for Education, Cultural and Welsh Language (DECWL).

DECWL aims to improve children's services, education and training provision to secure better outcomes for learners, business, and employers as set out in their strategic document, *The Learning Country*. It helps empower children, young people and adults through education and training to enjoy a better quality of life. DECWL also aims to help strengthen Wales' cultural identity, create a bilingual Wales and promote the importance of sport and physical activity to health and wellbeing.

### *DELLS/Voluntary Sector Compact Liaison Group*

The voluntary sector has now revived the Compact Group with DELLS and the first meeting took place in January, with a second meeting planned for September 2007.

Voluntary sector representation on this group has been identified to meet the learning agendas for the voluntary sector at national, regional and local levels, and include amongst others: a local learning provider, a community organisation, a national learning provider, a learning network representative, young people, disability groups, a voluntary sector employer, all of which have been cross-referenced to the DELLS remit.

Please contact WCVA Training on 029 2043 1723 or email [training@wcva.org.uk](mailto:training@wcva.org.uk) for a full list of representatives.

In addition, a funding sub group has been set up to drive forward the agenda for better access to funding for the sector. This group has been asked to make recommendations for change to the Compact Group in September. Further details will be included in the next newsletter.

## Research

### *Research into basic skills in the voluntary sector*

WCVA has recently completed research into basic skills activity in the sector, which compliments the work currently being undertaken by Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) as part of the Basic Skills Agency's national support project.

For a copy of the report, please contact WCVA Training on 029 2043 1723 or email [training@wcva.org.uk](mailto:training@wcva.org.uk)

For a summary of the Flintshire Basic Skills project visit [http://www.flvc.org.uk/basic\\_skills/wcvasummary.pdf](http://www.flvc.org.uk/basic_skills/wcvasummary.pdf)

### *Quality assurance in the voluntary sector*

Research into quality assurance in training provision in the voluntary sector has been conducted as part of the voluntary sector Workforce Hub's work programme for Wales. It has been acknowledged that the development of quality assurance systems for training providers in the third sector lags behind that of the public sector. It has also been felt that quality systems developed within public bodies are sometimes difficult to transfer to diverse and often small voluntary organisations. This has led to the suggestion that a kite mark or quality mark for training delivered through the third sector be developed. As a starting point, then, it was decided to conduct a short piece of qualitative research to determine the issues and potential for such a kite mark before developing an action plan for the sector.

The aims of the research were:

- To provide an evidence base for a consultation with the third sector regarding the development of a kite mark for training delivered through the third sector.
- Scope current use of quality assurance systems to determine potential ways forward.

For a copy of the research, please contact WCVA Training on 029 2043 1723 or email [training@wcva.org.uk](mailto:training@wcva.org.uk)

## Other news

### *Developing the PQASSO Quality Mark*

The Charities Evaluation Service (CES) have secured funding to develop an externally assessed, national 'Quality Mark' for PQASSO. PQASSO is CES' practical quality assurance system for small organisations.

It is intended that the external assessment will be carried out by means of peer review. The programme will be developed over the next few months and they envisage that Quality Mark applications will begin in early 2008. CES will be inviting expressions of interest in both those wishing to apply for the Quality Mark and those wishing to become peer review assessors by November 2007.

For further information contact Mirella Grillo [mirella@ces-vol.org.uk](mailto:mirella@ces-vol.org.uk) or visit [www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk)

## *National Grid for Learning Cymru*

Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) has won a major contract from the Welsh Assembly Government to take forward the National Grid for Learning Cymru's web-based learning support to 2010.

NGfL Cymru will have an enhanced remit to develop its library of interactive resources for teachers

Further information about NGfL Cymru: [www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk](http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk)

## *Third Sector Leadership Centre*

The Third Sector Leadership Centre is a project within the UK Workforce Hub which has been set up to raise the profile of leadership and leadership development across the third sector.

They work directly with third sector leaders of frontline and infrastructure organisations to build partnerships and expertise that will benefit the whole sector.

Their work focuses on four core themes:

1. Raising awareness of the value of leadership
2. Helping people to identify skills and development needs
3. Improving access to leadership development
4. Demonstrating the benefits of leadership development

The Third Sector Leadership Centre newsletter provides information, updates and news from the Centre. For further information or to subscribe to the newsletter visit [www.thirdsectorleadership.org.uk](http://www.thirdsectorleadership.org.uk)

## *Graduate Opportunities Wales (GO Wales)*

GO Wales is a business development and employability programme delivered by the university careers services in Wales. The programme is managed by HEFCW (the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales) and is sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government.

GO Wales offer a variety of services to help recruit and retain graduate staff. Organisations can benefit from offering work experience to a student or graduate, hosting a work placement or advertise a vacancy free of charge.

To find out more about GO Wales services visit [www.gowales.co.uk](http://www.gowales.co.uk).

## **WCVA news**

### *WCVA website - new section on workforce development*

Over the summer WCVA will be introducing a workforce development section on its website.

This section will give further information and links on:

- Careers in the voluntary sector
- Good employment practice
- Management development
- National Occupational Standards
- Quality
- Sector Skills Councils
- And much more.

The section will be going live during August 2007, further details will follow shortly.

## **Public Services Management Wales (PSMW) events**

### *Narrative leadership*

This event is aimed at leaders who are interested in exploring what really matters to them and how they can communicate it in an inspiring and engaging way. It will be invaluable for people whose roles require them to exercise influence as well as authority, who want to get their point across effectively and memorably. In short, it is for those who want to develop their capacity for *narrative leadership*.

Participants will explore the power of story and narrative in organisations to engage people's energy and commitment, to inspire them with a sense of purpose and to open their minds to new possibilities. Participants can expect to deepen their understanding of how story works and develop practical story-based leadership skills in the following areas:

- influencing with integrity and increasing personal authority
- communicating vision and purpose with flair and passion
- imagining future possibilities and creative strategies
- building communities of practice and effective teams
- diagnosing and changing organisational culture

**Date and venue:** 24 September 2007 - Ffynnon Las, Llanishen, Cardiff

**Cost:** Welsh Public Service: £195

### *Aspiring for leadership programme for managers from BME Groups*

PSMW are keen to hear from managers and leaders from the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community who would like to join the upcoming 'Aspiring to Leadership' programme. As part of a series of positive action programmes, PSMW successfully piloted Aspiring for Leadership for Managers from BME Groups (see case study). The programme's success has encouraged PSMW to recruit a second cohort, specifically tailored to the needs of participants.

#### **Case study**

Wahida Shah Kent, who leads ABCD, a small voluntary organisation, joined the Aspiring to Leadership programme for BME managers with "some hesitations and anxieties" about the nature of the programme. However, Wahida soon found that joining a group of nine other BME managers from across the public services was both safe and enabling: "The facilitators inspired me to be more assertive in challenging situations and leading in a proactive way. With my programme mentor I hope to continue this journey and develop a level of self-awareness and confidence that I think will help me take my next step in leadership.

Participants on the programme came from the police, fire service, local government and the voluntary sector. Wahida said that “being such a cross-sector group gave us a unique opportunity to communicate across organisations and identify similar challenges and ways we could all support each other in achieving our goals. It was very reassuring!”

**Programme dates:** Online 360-degree self-assessments from July 2007 to assess development needs, followed by five development days (9, 30 October, 29 November 2007, 10 January and 5 February 2008).

**Cost:** £700 excl VAT (£1500 for those outside Welsh public services)

## Leadership skills for women managers

Following the encouraging evaluation of this two-day course which ran successfully in 2006-2007 across Wales, PSMW are providing the opportunity for more people to participate in this two-day programme.

### Programme aim

Whilst more women are becoming managers, the glass ceiling is still a reality for many. Informed by the latest research, this programme provides a supportive but challenging opportunity to develop inner confidence and leadership skills. This programme offers middle and senior female managers wishing to increase their impact as leaders, to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to move their career forward and unleash their full potential.

### Dates and venues:

25-26 September, Ffynnon Las, Llanishen, Cardiff

22-23 January, Oriel House Hotel, St Asaph

**Cost:** Welsh Public Service: £250; Others: £350

For more information on any of the above courses or to book a place, please contact [Sarah.Grant@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Grant@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or telephone 029 2068 1310.

## Ufi/learndirect Cymru

### *Civil servants get back to basics*

A new project introduced by the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union aims to assess the skills shortages of civil servants and to address these by upskilling staff through a blend of traditional and learndirect courses.

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills and research indicates that amongst adults in Wales, 25% do not have Level 1 literacy skills; and 53% do not have Level 1 numeracy skills. These basic skills, together with proficiency with IT are essential skills needed in order to be able to function and progress at work.

Due to the stigma associated with basic skills training, staff were initially concerned that they may be seen as underachievers and were wary about becoming involved in the project. To help uptake, PCS advertised that learndirect courses would be on offer to all those who participated in screenings. “learndirect courses have been a valuable aid in promoting these screenings, and the take up of courses has been considerable with 103 learners opting for 625 courses over a two month period”.

If you would like more information on the PCS Project, please contact Anne Jenkins, Basic Skills Project Worker on 029 2066 6363 or visit [www.pcs.org.uk](http://www.pcs.org.uk).

### *New look for learndirect online*

The **learndirect** website is being transformed and will be launched this month. As well as a new modern design representative of the strengthened brands and use of colours and logos, usability will be improved, offering visitors clearer sign-posting and navigation with advisor audio to add to the engaging content.

The **learndirect** Careers Advice forums will also be launched. This is an area where members will be able to ask questions and exchange views and opinions with peers and careers advisors.

This is the first step in a major overhaul of our web presence to bring us truly into the digital age and to really start exploiting the website as an integrated part of the business. Although, changes will be implemented this month, the redevelopment of the site will be phased over the forthcoming year.

### *Cymru conference - learndirect: improving skills in Wales*

Earlier this year, Ufi Cymru held an all-Wales Conference in Cardiff. The conference was successful in bringing together over 120 individuals from a variety of education providers and agencies to network and discuss the possibilities offered through partnership working with learndirect.

The event offered an opportunity for partners to understand the common policy priorities and drivers of Ufi Cymru and the Department of Education Lifelong Learning and Skills. The day also provided Ufi Cymru with an opportunity to develop a long-term campaign to communicate the vision and driving force of Ufi Cymru to a targeted audience.

To celebrate the achievement of engaging with 100,000 learners across Wales, 11 learners were recognized within the conference for their learning achievements and their contribution towards the success of learndirect. The conference also enabled learndirect providers from a range of backgrounds to demonstrate individual examples of good practice in a variety of workshops.

Ufi Cymru will continue to be creative and innovative and complement existing delivery mechanisms and will also seek to maximise the economics of delivery, particularly given the potential of web enabled learning to radically change both the costs of and access to learning.

Specific actions for 07/08 will focus on getting more learndirect into the communities and businesses across Wales. We will focus on ensuring that more learners progress and achieve qualifications.

For further details contact Ufi/learndirect Cymru on 029 2043 6942 or visit [www.ufi.com](http://www.ufi.com)