

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Cost and Outreach Career Learning Pilot

Background

- The Career Learning Pilot will be used to inform the National Retraining Scheme and support the Governments ambition for an adult education system that helps people upskill and reskill throughout their working lives.
- The pilot is intended to drive up skill levels of people in work and help to improve productivity.
- The pilot presented Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP with an opportunity to test out new approaches to improving skills of the workforce in the LEP area.
- Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP and partners worked together to develop and design the pilot to meet local labour and market needs.
- The pilot qualifications (level 3 and above) could only be delivered by partners who already had Advanced Learner Loan facilities and premises in Staffordshire.

Policy context – Department for Education.

The key thing the DfE want to test as part of these pilots are:

- How best to reach adults who are in work and low skilled and;
- Whether reducing the cost of courses (by 25%, 75% and 100%) makes targeted adults more likely to do economically valuable learning matched to local economic need



Local outreach



Face to face IAG



Course fee subsidy

Timeline, key milestone & support

Timelines/key milestones:

Individual local area workshops	December 2017
Costed delivery plans from areas	February 2018
Course priorities identified	March 2018
Messaging/ outreach begins	March 2018
Advanced Learner Loan applications open	May 2018
Subsidised learning begins	September 2018
Initial evaluations results	End of 2018

Support available:

- Funding available to support pilot activity;
- DfE has partnered with Learning and Work Institute to offer support throughout the running of these pilots.

Purpose of the Pilot

The pilot was to test the best ways to reach out to lower skilled working adults, and the effect different levels of fee subsidy had on the demand for courses which are valuable to adults and important to the economy of the area.

The Pilot tested:

- How best to reach adults who are in work and low skilled, or close to returning to the labour market; this also included the use of face-to-face career guidance by the National Career Service (NCS).
- Whether discounting the course cost (by 25%, 75% and 100%) made the targeted adults more likely to do economically valuable learning matched to local economic need.

Our Approach focused upon:

- Does using Local Authority engagement with service users provide an effective route to reach out to people
- Do incentives linked to key skills shortages areas stimulate upskilling & reskilling amongst key markets

Route to market

Target Audiences

- Returners to work after childcare breaks,
- Self-employed people needing to upskill,
- Childminders looking to further progress their skills,
- Employees in Micro/Small businesses wanting to upskill,
- Those close to the labour market looking for work (unemployed with qualifications to at least level 2).

Key messages for target groups

- “Your turn to learn” – prepare for your return to work with discounted courses.
- “Build your Future” – get the latest skills and boost your business with discounted courses.
- “Grow your future” – you have started your career and we want to support you to go further with discounted courses.
- “Skills for growth” – grow your skills to grow your earnings.
- Those close to the Labour market - first 4 messages.

Outline - Campaign Activities

Media channels

- Social media engagement; Facebook groups; LinkedIn campaign,
- Email to parents of young children; Early Years providers and school partnerships;
- Advertising in children's centres, libraries and pharmacies, waste recycling centres,
- TV advertising using Sky Adsmart,
- Outdoor advertising at Direct mail-shot,

Brokers & Intermediaries

- Attendance at business skills events; Growth Hub and Jet businesses;
- UnionLearn reps in businesses; mini business skills events,
- Partnership with builders' merchants & supermarkets,
- Attendance at Childcare Cluster Events and use of Health Visitors.

Priority Sectors, Qualifications & Discount %

Sector	Subject Qualifications	Discount
Business & Finance	Leadership & Management	75%
	Human Resource	75%
	Accounting/Bookkeeping	75%
ICT & Digital	IT users	100%
Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	75%
	Fabrication & Welding Practices & CAD	25%
Tourism & Hospitality	Hospitality Supervision, Leadership & Professional Cookery	100%
Construction	Construction & Built Environment	75%
	Plumbing/Wall Tiling	75%
Health & Care	Health & Social Care/Adult Care/Leadership & Management	100%
	Diploma Care for Adults	75%
	Children & Young People's Workforce	75%

Delivery Partners

- South Staffordshire College
- Buxton & Leek College
- Burton & South Derbyshire College
- Newcastle and Stafford College Group
- Stoke-on-Trent College
- Acacia Training

Delivery Plan Costs

There were two elements to the pilot funding from the DfE - the costs of the outreach activities and management of the Pilot, and the cost of the discount to courses.

- The outreach, marketing and project management of the pilot activities were costed at £196,211 and were funded to the LEP from DfE.
- The cost of the discounts if all available courses are taken up by around 500 FE learner loan eligible learners based on the proposed mix of courses and variation in fee could potentially yield around £1million in incentives for courses in the LEP area.
- The discounts of the courses will be applied through the FE students Loan System. Therefore, the total cost of the Pilot in the Plan submitted to the DfE was £1.2million

Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation and residual risk
Overall programme engagement.	Drop out from learning, affecting achievement rates of providers.	Med	High	Provide good initial and ongoing IAG to ensure that there is commitment to complete the course.
Raising aspirations.	Engaging and attracting people not ready to undertake a level 3.	High	High	Marketing material needs to ensure that loan subsidies are pitched at the right level to avoid misunderstanding and disappointment.
Engaging sufficient numbers of people.	Low numbers engaging.	Med	High	Use multi engagement routes to enable a higher amount of interest.
	High numbers engaging	Med	Med	Providers need to be sufficiently prepared to meet demand crated.
Offer of qualifications not broad enough	Restrictions in qualifications on catalogue. Funding policies.	High	High	Engagement/marketing to promote an offer wider than the discounted courses.

Issues and Barriers

- The qualifications (level 3 and above) had to be completed in 12 months. Most of the target groups were already in work therefore were unable to go onto a full time course – this meant that it was impossible for them to complete in 12 months.
- The LEP area was restricted in the number of courses that were approved for a discount by the DfE. Data was used relating to providers previous delivery rather than allowing courses that are currently important in the area.
- Information was slow in being shared regarding the delivery rules, the data collections and evaluation processes.
- Some of the data collection processes changed after the pilot began, causing confusion for NCS especially.
- NCS were slow in understanding the concept of the pilot and were not as flexible as they could have been in the approach to their role as customer service first point of contact and guidance provider. This improved over the life of the pilot and NCS needed extra resource to cope with the queries.

Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Measurement and Evaluation

The evaluation will focus on different outreach and engagement approaches.

Main outreach activities:

	Leaflets	Social Media (reach)	Letters and Emails	Programmatic Advertising (impressions) plus sky
Returners to work	25,000	116,000	5,500	948,000 42,000 (sky users)
Self employed	25,000	42,000	7,000	934,000
Employees of small businesses	25,000	102,000		667,000

- Staffordshire County Council led the outreach campaign, making use of its resource, including marketing expertise, local knowledge across the LEP area and in house data bases. This proved effective (despite the tight time constraints) particularly in terms of costs and output.

Measurement and Evaluation

Impact measures:

	Website (landed)	Website (enquires rec'd)	Telephone (calls rec'd)
Returners to work	16,025	1,049	1,049
Self employed	6,044	259	149
Employees of small businesses	8,599	619	382

The messages that emphasised learning could help “remove barriers” received considerably better responses than those highlighting the “benefits” to learning. This applied across all target groups - 87% responded to “remove barriers” and only 13% to “benefits”.

- Marketing material displayed the branding of all Stoke and Staffordshire partners involved in the pilot. It was felt that this was an important feature to help reassure individuals that this was a genuine offer.
- Enrolment data has not yet been finalised. L&WI are still in the process of collecting this on behalf of the DfE. Initial feedback has suggested that the pilot in the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP area has been one of the most successful.