



## Learning & Working Group

Notes from the meeting held on the  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2010



### What's been happening?

#### ConTact.

ConTact are having some problems getting some of the people they support onto level 2 courses at Berkshire Agricultural College. They believe this is because of funding issues. ConTact will send a contact name to Debra so the Partnership can make some enquiries as to why there is a problem.

#### Skillnet Group.

The Skillnet group are based in the South East region and look at employment for people with learning disabilities.

The Skillnet Group is also a partner in **Aspirations For Life** alongside **Paradigm, Pure Innovations, Building Bridges, IBK** and the **Council for Disabled Children**.

**Aspirations For Life** is a campaign funded by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (now the Department for Education) as part of the *Valuing Employment Now* strategy. The campaign will raise aspirations and expectations for children and young people with learning disabilities; with a particular focus on employment.

**Aspirations For Life** will develop new ways of working with children and young people with learning disabilities, their families, and the range of professionals involved in their lives.

The website goes live on Monday 21st June. Richard Lamplough is the project's Communications Manager and he will be sending out a progress bulletin once a month until March of 2011. It would be good to peoples input, feedback or ideas over the next nine months or so.

For more information contact Jo Kidd at [jo.kidd@skillnetgroup.co.uk](mailto:jo.kidd@skillnetgroup.co.uk)



### **Bus passes and wallets.**

Some people with learning disabilities believe that they cannot use their bus passes before 9.30am which prevents them from getting to work on time. We believe that they can but Debra will check this out.

The Partnership has received an enquiry for funding for the bus wallets which are a communication aid to help people travel more independently. At the current time the Partnership does not feel it can allocate any of more of it's LDDF or Campus Closure grants but we will keep it in mind until things are more certain.

### **Incapacity Benefit.**

The re-assessment of Incapacity Benefit has been delayed but a pilot is planned to be run in Burnley and Aberdeen in October.



### **Partnership open event.**

The Partnerships open event took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> June and was attended by about 40-45 people.



We started off by looking at what is happening around employment nationally and locally for people with learning disabilities and we showed the Valuing Employment Now DVD.

We then broke into work groups and asked people what they thought about people working, how we change the view that people can't work and what

they think stops people working. We also asked what do we need to do to help people get real jobs and what information is missing.

People with learning disabilities who came to the meeting said they wanted to work.

Others said they thought people could work and should be able to work but that often the benefits system prevents them having paid work or their carers don't want them to work. Lots of people said that we should show the Valuing Employment Now DVD to employers and that people needed more information and guidance around benefits and what they can do to get work.

Generally there seems to be a lot of confusion around benefits and what hours people could work. It was suggested that we develop a guide to help people find out more about work and understand how they can work.

We agreed that this group will look closely at how we can make sure what people have said happens in Reading.



### **Employment monitoring.**

We agreed that we need to keep an eye on who is working, what type of work people are doing, how many hours they are doing and what is stopping people working.

We have agreed that this employment information will be sent to Debra every 2 months so we can keep our information up to date.

Debra will also send information about current vacancies out to the Community Learning Disability Team and other services to encourage more referrals to Ways & Means and ConTact so some of the vacancies can be filled.

We also agreed that Ways & Means and ConTact will liaise more frequently with each other.



### **Employment Pilot.**

We need to find out what has been the experience of managers in Reading Borough Council who have gone through our employment pilot.

Julie Eden from the Strategy team has developed a list of questions which Julie and Debra will use to interview the managers face to face. We feel that we will get more information about the pilot process if we interview on a 1:1 basis.

We will arrange the interviews over the next few weeks and feed the responses back to this group.



- 5<sup>th</sup> August 10 - 12.30-2pm in Committee Room 1.
- 7<sup>th</sup> September 10 - 10.30-12.00 in Committee Room 1
- 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010 - 2.30pm-4.30pm in Committee Room 5
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December 10 - 2pm-3.30pm in Committee Room 1
- 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 - 2.30pm-4.30pm in Committee Room 5

**All of the meetings will be held in Committee Rooms at the Civic Offices.**