

# Dorset & Somerset Training Provider Network

# Strategy

August 2008 – July 2010

Reviewed: August 2009

## 1. Overview

The Dorset and Somerset Work Based Learning Networks (the network) have developed over recent years to become individual proactive membership organisations involved in the operational and strategic development of their members and a strategic partner to the stakeholders. The Networks membership has been traditionally providers delivering the Apprenticeship family offer.

The Dorset network has an elected Chair and Executive Committee who lead and guide the networks strategy and activities. A Network Manager seconded from a provider manages the communication hub, manages operational projects, and administers the network and its activities. The network has a Mission and Objectives statement agreed annually at the AGM to highlight the operational priorities for the group over the following year. The network has managed and delivered various active research and development projects over the past two years for LSC and LSN.

The Somerset network is less formally structured. It is effectively an association of LSC funded providers active in Somerset. It has an elected Chair and Vice Chair and is supported by a Partnership Manager for the Somerset office of the LSC in Taunton. The Chair and Partnership Manager act as communications hubs and jointly develop agendas for network meetings. From time-to-time volunteers hold briefs for area of special interest e.g. Health & Safety' and Skills for Life.

### **Network Constitution, structure and Finance**

Until recently the Dorset network had 19 paid up members all delivering the Apprenticeship family programmes. A recent development is the addition of a Train to Gain network of 15 members. The Dorset network operates within a written constitution that binds the members as a membership organisation with no legal status. The constitution sets out the guidelines for operation and ensures the network is administered professionally at all times.

The Chair leads the networks strategy and finance with approval from the Executive Committee and manages the network manager on a daily basis offering strategic and commercial guidance. The Network Manager is contracted from Paragon for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. Paragon hold funds adequate to cover the Managers salary and expenses for approximately 18 months from the start date.

The Somerset network is open to all Apprenticeship (17) and Train to Gain (13) providers active in Somerset. For the past year meetings have been held with separate agendas suiting both funding streams.

The network has received positive support and encouragement from the Taunton Office of the LSC but this has never extended to financial support capable of developing a more formal infrastructure. However LSC funding of the Joint Dorset and Somerset Networking event in April 2008 was seen as a welcome indicator of support for the proposed merger.

Subscriptions have been discussed historically but recently have been held in abeyance pending a merger with Dorset. Meeting locations have either been provided by the LSC or latterly by a provider willing to act as host.

**09/10 update:** Network members pay an annual subscription of £500 (approved by the Executive Group). This pays for the network meeting venue and lunches at the meetings. The DSTPN has a total cash reserve of approximately £50k held in an instant access deposit and a standard current account as at 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

## **2. Mission & Aims**

### **MISSION**

The networks mission is to provide a strategic voice and effective operational support for LSC contracted learning providers in Dorset and Somerset and to plan and facilitate meeting the needs of employers and the achievement of learners through the networks aims.

### **AIMS**

- To provide the preferred means of communication for providers and stakeholders
- To provide a strategic voice for providers
- Encourage a culture of shared responsibility for the achievement of the areas targets
- Encourage a culture of timely identification of issues and challenges effecting achievement of targets
- Encourage a culture of sharing success, expertise and resources
- Encourage a culture of working together to solve issues
- Supporting each other to ensure that Dorset and Somerset providers maximise their success
- To support providers in improving the quality of their provision to meet employers and learners needs
- To support providers to increase the numbers of learners they recruit, retain and qualify
- Offer an environment where providers can link with other providers for mutual benefit and Provide a focal point for joint ventures and bids
- Provide workshops on topics of interest an development
- To support providers to meet local, regional and national priorities.
- To increase the external awareness and promote the success of the Learning and Skills offer
- To increase partnership working with external sector related organisations
- To represent all member providers on a fair and unbiased basis

### **3. Vision**

The network vision is to encourage and inspire providers to operate in a culture of collaborative working for the benefit of all whilst continually enhancing the experience, learning and achievement of learners.

### **4. The need for the Network strategic, structural and constitutional development**

As the Post 16 learning and skills sector evolves the Network needs to change and develop to meet the needs of its members in the environment in which they operate. The future holds a number of major fundamental changes with high impact to the provider. The networks role includes keeping pace with the change, keeping all providers informed and being a participant in the change development process at a strategic level ensuring the providers voice is heard as the changes evolve. The drivers for change are;

1. The merging of Somerset and Dorset LSC,
2. The widening of the Apprenticeship family to include additional programmes and therefore ....
3. The LSC Commissioning policy planned conversion to the Local Authority
4. New providers
5. The Leitch report recommendation for and the increased numbers of learners staying in education and training until 18 years old
6. The 16-18 year old entitlement to an Apprenticeship in 2013
7. Increased Apprenticeship participation targets
8. Continuous quality improvement
9. The introduction of the National Apprenticeship Service and its pilot in the South West Region
10. The imminent change in Government Machinery.

### **6. Strategic priorities**

Strategic aim 1 – Effective communication hub for providers and stakeholders

Strategic aim 2 – Drive the network to achieve the area targets

Strategic aim 3 – Strategic voice for the membership

Strategic aim 4 – Continuous improvement of provision

Strategic aim 5 – Increase external awareness of the learning and skills offer

Strategic aim 6 – Sustainability of the network

## 7. Strategic plan

Strategic aim	Activity	Targets & measures	Responsibility	By when	Review notes
<p><b>Strategic aim 1</b> Effective communication hub for providers, stakeholders and external organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update the current DWBLN website to become an effective tool for Dorset &amp; Somerset providers</li> <li>2. Horizon scan for topics of interest and importance</li> <li>3. Develop an effective and efficient communication strategy</li> <li>4. Develop effective communication tools</li> <li>5. Identify the key strategic and operational groups the network need to be engaged with</li> <li>6. Develop a key group attendance matrix and ensure network coverage</li> <li>7. Introduce a reporting protocol</li> <li>8. To become the primary conduit for communications to the network from external organisations.</li> </ol>	<p>100% of members receive information of importance and interest on time and in a suitable media</p>	<p>Network Development Manager</p>	<p>October 2008</p>	<p>August 09 – inclusion of a follow up activity to enhance aims 2&amp;3. The activity is to produce as required an ‘impact’ bulletin. This bulletin will offer IAG for providers focussing on the impact on providers following the announcement of any changes within the sector.</p> <p>The website was launched in January 09 and web stats to date show good usage by members.</p> <p>The network bulletin is well received by members and external organisations who submit articles on a regular basis.</p>

<p><b>Strategic aim 2</b> Drive the network, achieve the area targets</p>	<p>1. Encourage a culture of joint responsibility for achieving the area targets</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the area targets</li> <li>2. Introduce a performance agenda item on the Executive Committee agenda</li> <li>3. Timely sharing of performance data</li> <li>4. Produce a data sharing protocol</li> <li>5. produce a standard data set</li> <li>6. Produce a data calendar</li> <li>7. Encourage a culture of timely identification of issues and challenges effecting achievement of targets</li> <li>8. Encourage a culture of working together to solve issues</li> </ol>	<p>All providers engage in the culture of shared ownership</p> <p>Area targets met</p>	<p>All</p> <p>LSC &amp; Executive</p>	<p>November 2008</p> <p>July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009</p>	<p>August 09 review;</p> <p>Performance data is shared at executive and plenary meetings.</p> <p>The bulletin identifies issues and challenges and a new 'impact' newsletter for 09/10 will help direct providers to solve issues.</p>
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<p><b>Strategic aim 3</b> Strategic voice for the membership</p>	<p>1. Identify where the network requires strategic representation with priority given to the MOG changes 2. Establish a matrix of the key groups the network needs to engage at a strategic level</p>	<p>The network voice is delivered in a representative and unbiased fashion</p>	<p>Network Executive</p>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>August 09 review;  Network Chair and Manager attend a number of meetings to give the network strategic voice for its members.</p>
<p><b>Strategic aim 4</b> Continuous improvement of provision</p>	<p>1. Encourage “champions” from the network membership to lead on specialist topics 2. Provide workshops on topics of interest and development 3. Horizon scan for topics of interest and information 4. Invite relevant specialists to inform and work with the network 5. Engage relevant national and regional development programmes for cross network benefit</p>	<p>All “hot topics” of interest and relevance to continuous improvement of provision are communicated to members and where appropriate the network hosts development or information events</p>	<p>Executive</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>August 09 review;  Network members lead on various sub groups.  Specialists attend network meetings.  The Chair and Manager attend regional meetings and engage with development programmes for cross network benefit when appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Strategic aim 5</b> Increase external awareness of the learning and skills</p>	<p>1. Identifying target groups 2. Identify the collateral needs to promote the</p>	<p>This is a continuous process</p>	<p>Executive</p>	<p>November 2008</p>	<p>August 09 review;  Active engagement with e-learning and</p>

offer	<p>offer effectively</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Scan current collateral and tools for effective material</li> <li>4. Develop promotional collateral and tools where required</li> <li>5. Review resources required to promote the offer effectively</li> <li>6. Active involvement and network leadership with major sector events i.e. Skills festival.</li> <li>7. To continue to develop partnership working with other sector related organisations</li> <li>8. Re-brand and market the new network.</li> </ol>				<p>the formation of a sub group for 09/10 following the delivery of several successful workshops.</p> <p>Continued involvement with Somerset Skills event in Nov 09.</p> <p>Development of partnership working is ongoing. Project work with Aimhigher in 09/10 is planned.</p> <p>The network has a new branding and website.</p>
<p><b>Strategic aim 6</b> Sustainability of the network</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective leadership of the network</li> <li>2. Ensure there is an adequate infrastructure to achieve the aims and objectives</li> <li>3. Produce a finance plan</li> <li>4. Ensure the financial viability of the infrastructure</li> </ol>		Executive	August 2008	<p>August 09 review;</p> <p>The Chair covering Strategic areas and the Manager Operations is working well.</p> <p>Finances secured to sustain this during 09/10.</p>