

# **GWP POSITIONING STATEMENT**

## **February 2011**



The Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership (GWP) was established in April 2007 by the merger of the Gloucestershire Training Providers Forum and the Wiltshire Training Provider Partnership and was formed to provide a network body of LSC contracted training providers. All providers who have subscribed to GWP have one or more contracts with the LSC successor bodies, the Skills Funding Agency and / or YPLA under Foundation Learning, employer responsive, learner responsive or ESF. Approximately 66% of all contracted providers in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire belong to the network.

GWP's vision is to:

- endorse and promote learning and equality of opportunity for all;
- establish a proactive and consultative forum for Foundation Learning, employer responsive, learner responsive and ESF providers in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire;
- consider and discuss strategic Foundation Learning, employer responsive and learner responsive issues and developments;
- receive views and feedback from interested parties and to signpost items of value to partners; and
- actively communicate the network's views and conclusions to local, regional and national bodies in the Foundation Learning, employer responsive, learner responsive and ESF sectors.

As of 1 February 2011, the network has 37 members, of which:

- 30 deliver Train to Gain;
- 24 deliver Work Based Learning;
- 12 deliver Foundation Learning; and
- 11 deliver ESF contracts.

Members' meetings are held on a quarterly basis. The meetings open with presentations on topical subjects to which representatives from the Sector Skills Councils, the Skills Funding Agency, National Apprenticeship Service and Local Authorities are invited. The members' only formal meeting follows the presentations.

The network is overseen by a management group which meets approximately one month before each meeting to discuss the agenda for the members' meetings, review the vision and objectives of the network, set short and long term objectives, and ensure that the network is meeting the specific needs of its members.

## **Short term objectives**

The publication of the Positioning Statement in April 2009 aimed to advise the members and stakeholders of the strategic positioning of the network in response to the proposed changes to the LSC, to ensure that the network maintained good working relationships with the funding bodies and provide members with up to date information on the timescales for the changes. Since the demise of the LSC, the network has cemented relationships with the new funding agencies, including the Skills Funding Agency, the YPLA, local authorities, National Apprenticeship Service, locally and regionally (through the SWTPN).

A change of government in 2010 brought more challenges to the way that adult learning is funded and managed. The introduction of the Minimum Contract Level (MCL) of £500K for the year 2011 / 2012 and the indication that the MCL will increase over a number of years is proving to be a major issue not only for those providers already affected by the MCL, but those who may yet fall with the MCL contract figures that have been suggested.

With the many changes taking place in the adult learning landscape, the management group have recently reviewed their strategy and priorities for 2011 / 2012. In response, the management group has set out below their short term objectives.

GWP's short-term objectives are to:

*Review and revise the structure of the network*

- Review options available and present the options to the members, for a vote at the AGM.
- Move the accounts to the new structure.

*Feed back the requirements, issues and concerns of the training providers to the funding agencies.*

- Keep up to date with the staffing changes within the funding agencies and maintain links with the appropriate staff.
- Jointly develop procedures to ensure that the training providers are kept in appropriate communication loops and that the network can continue to act as a single voice and liaise with the agencies.
- Ensure that representatives from each of the commissioning and contracting agencies are invited to members' meetings.

*Keep members informed as to the progress and developments regarding the new funding landscape and the introduction of the Minimum Contract Level (MCL).*

- Organise regular presentations covering the developments in MCL.
- Keep up to date with the implementation of MCL, and how many providers locally are affected.
- Provide support and signposting to aid partners currently and potentially affected by MCL.

*Raise the profile and awareness of the Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Partnership to local employers.*

- Add pages onto the website promoting the apprenticeships delivered by members.
- Review Search Engine Optimisation on the website to ensure that the page appears high on search listings for local employers and individuals looking for training.
- Continue to work with the funding bodies' staff to ensure that information on the network is passed on before and during changes in the funding bodies are made.

*Increase income*

- Invite non-members to attend training events and charge fees to subsidise costs.
- Increase the number of members through offering an affiliate membership option to SSCs, the local authorities, LSIS, Learning South West, NAS, Skills Funding Agency and other bodies working in adult learning.
- Source other funds to support individual projects for the network.