

**Working in Partnership to Encourage Learning**  
**A case study of events held in Nottinghamshire for Adult Learners week 2010**

Within the current climate of rapid change across the NHS staff wellbeing is an essential and important area to focus on. Many NHS Trusts are holding information sessions and giving staff as much information as possible to help them through this change. The downsizing of staff numbers is a reality that every member of NHS staff in the country is aware of. In light of this there are a number of things which can be done to practically help staff as well as support them emotionally. One of the areas for focus is increased uptake of training to ensure that staff skills are current and transferable within the labour market.

Learning events are an ideal forum for sharing with staff what learning and training opportunities are available to them both internally in the NHS and externally in their local area. To know everything that is out there is beyond the remit of one person and partnership working to draw all opportunities for staff together is a must.

Union Learning Representatives (ULR's) can be well placed to coordinate and draw together everyone that should be involved in learning events; especially if they have good links with internal training departments. This has been the case with Michelle Place, ULR for NHS Nottinghamshire County. A successful event was run for the annual "Unionlearn Festival of Learning" in October 2009 at NHS Bassetlaw headquarters coordinated by Michelle in partnership with Gemma Walker, Funding Coordinator for NHS Nottinghamshire County who works across three PCT's in Nottinghamshire.



Staff accessing advice at NHS Bassetlaw

There was subsequently keen interest in running further events across the county to enable more staff to access information and this was explored and developed with an aim to dovetail into the annual “Unionlearn Learning at Work” event in May 2010. This was seen as a good opportunity to put on further events as Michelle was able to utilise some funding via Unionlearn. Three events were planned so that there was an event in suitable accessible NHS venues in Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham city.

Michelle secured funding from Unionlearn and utilised this to provide refreshments and an opportunity to experience a learning activity. Gemma was able to secure free venues in two areas (county and city) and a union steward was able to secure a free venue in Bassetlaw. With venues and funding secure Michelle and Gemma were able to pull the events together. Gemma extensively advertised the events via email and posters (which she devised) and engaged learning and development to provide a member of staff to give advice on internal courses.

Some of the topics covered were

- JIF (joint investment framework) \*
- LBR (learning beyond registration) \*\*
- Skills for Life
- Becoming a Health Ambassador
- Joining Unison.



Staff accessing advice at NHS Nottingham City

\* A fund accessed by NHS Agenda for Change bands 1-4 non-registered staff

\*\*A fund accessed by Agenda for Change bands 5 and above registered staff  
Agenda for Change is a pay system for NHS staff.

Michelle was tasked with locating external sources of information and was able to secure

- Open University
- New College Nottingham
- North Nottinghamshire College
- Guideline Adult Careers Service
- Financial Services Authority.

They were able to provide information on available local courses, on career pathways and how to manage finances in this current difficult economic climate.

Attendance at all three events was good, showing staff interest and commitment in learning, developing and providing the best service to patients.

In total **128** staff came to the three events, and they gave positive feedback about the information they received:

“I am now booked on to do some training”

“This was extremely useful”

“I have been given drive and inspiration”

In tandem with this positivity staff expressed their concerns over the changes we are going to experience over the coming months and it was invaluable to have Union representation to be able to advise staff about the consultation that has been ongoing with trusts and staff side representatives; union stewards who discuss issues with trusts and are consulted as to staff opinions and who agree actions on staff's behalf.



Staff accessing advice at NHS Nottinghamshire County

Staff were also offered the opportunity to find out about Skills for Life. This is an initiative born from Test the NHS which allows staff to brush up their English and maths skills with support from the NHS. They can undertake short courses and gain accredited qualifications in English and maths.

Looking to the future events like these are important to enable staff to access information about learning that will enhance their skills and be transferable in the current job market, both within the NHS and external to it. Ensuring that staff have access to appropriate training will allow the NHS to provide patient centred care of the high standard it currently achieves in the future.

There is a commitment to carry on this good work and meetings have been set up to explore options, especially recruiting new local ULR's and supporting them to put on learning events in their Trusts.



Michelle learns how to pick up on tension and how to remove it!

**Contact Details:**

Michelle Place

Work Related Learning/ Careers Events Coordinator

Nottinghamshire Health and Social Care Community Workforce Team

Floor 2 Mill 3 Pleasley Vale Business Park

Outgang Lane

Mansfield

Notts

NG19 8RL

Email: [michelle.place@nottspct.nhs.uk](mailto:michelle.place@nottspct.nhs.uk)

Tel: 01623 819363

Website: [www.nottsworkforce.nhs.uk](http://www.nottsworkforce.nhs.uk)