

Skills Support for the Workforce: Whitwick Community Enterprises

Skills Support for the Workforce is a European Social Fund funded scheme to help improve the skills of employees and volunteers working in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The delivery partners are Leicester College, Loughborough College, South Leicestershire College and Stephenson College and capacity building partners are One East Midlands, Enable, Business2Business and EMFEC.

Set up in 2007 by local people and for the benefit of local people, registered charity Whitwick Community Enterprises, which delivers training for 14 to 24 year olds and referrals by Job Centre Plus, including work and home based qualifications, is one organisation that has benefited from Skills Support for the Workforce.

Starting at Whitwick Community Enterprises 12 months ago, initially on a three month contract, HR Officer Katy Ford started studying for the CIPD Level 3 Diploma in HR Practice at Stephenson College, Coalville in September 2014.



The course, which takes place three hours a week on Thursday evenings, covers the key areas those who work in HR are likely to be involved in, with modules including learning and development; data management; recruitment; performance; handling change; and managing the employment relationship from induction to exit. Katy and her fellow-students complete an assignment at the end of each module alongside interactive elements including presentations.

The benefit of attending the course for Katy, who is new to HR, is that the knowledge and skills she has gained are useful for both her current and future career, whilst Whitwick Community Enterprises benefits from Katy being able to put what she learns immediately into practice.

Although the course was not initially part of the of the Skills Support for the Workforce programme, Enable, the voluntary and community sector learning and skills consortium for the East Midlands, negotiated with Stephenson College for Katy's place to be funded through the scheme.

Katy has found Stephenson College to be very keen for the sector to access training through the Skills Support for the Workforce scheme, making sure that paperwork is correct and that problems do not arise.

Alongside Katy, 11 other staff and volunteers from Whitwick Community Enterprises have undertaken free training as part of the Skills Support for the Workforce scheme, enabling the charity to increase its skills and knowledge base and make substantial savings in training costs. Courses attended include:

- Education and Training Award (Level 3) providing an introduction into teaching and the lifelong learning sector through an experimental approach that integrates theory and practice;
- Assessing Vocationally Related Competence Award (Level 3) for practitioners who assess the demonstration of competence in a work environment using a variety of assessment methods;
- Information Advice and Guidance Skills (Level 3) covering the full one-to-one interview process from developing the relationship with a client to completing an action plan; and
- Literacy and numeracy teaching.

For further information on Whitwick Community Enterprises visit www.whitwickcommunityenterprises.co.uk and for Skills Support for the Workforce visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/skillssupportfortheworkforce.

“The course provides formal knowledge to back my work up and give me the skills needed to work in HR.”

“Because of the nature of the course I can put what I learn into practice from day one.”

Katy Ford, HR Officer,
Whitwick Community
Enterprises