



Disability Discrimination Act Phase 2 Regional action research projects

Site final report

Project title: Developing a whole organisation approach to staff development involving learners

Region: West Midlands

Organisation: Warwickshire College

Executive Coordinator: Hilary Allison

Sites: Warwickshire College, Zenith Apprenticeships, Royal National College for the Blind, Shropshire County Training

June 2006

The main criterion for including projects on this website is that they are all developmental or action research projects undertaken as part of DDA: taking the work forward. The projects aimed to help providers implement the DDA and to improve practice to meet the requirements of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities more effectively. They do not necessarily reflect good or best practice.

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Disability Discrimination Act: taking the work forward

Phase 2 Action Research Projects 2005/2006

Final report Dec 2005

1. Site Final Report

Section 1 - Name

Hilary Allison
Warwickshire College

Section 2 – Major focus

The main focus of the project was to clearly identify the training that was needed for all staff to exceed compliance with DDA 4. Those who have worked closely with DDA fully understand the implications of the act for all staff and appreciate the breadth of knowledge needed.

The objective was not to expand the training programme merely to give explicit guidance to the relevant groups of workers as to the appropriateness of a particular title option. This objective necessitated the auditing of materials being used for training.

By staff we include everyone who works on college sites therefore the grid needed to clearly identify training needed for both teaching and support staff at all levels within the organisation

By analysing data, conducting focus groups and consulting with user groups we were assured that the training was covering some of the complex and specific issues for students with LDD.

In addition

Parallel to this the college was researching the provision for PLD within the West Midlands Region which complemented the project. The report emphasized the lack of provision in the Coventry and Warwickshire area and the very specific training that would need to be developed to enable staff to support those with complex difficulties.

This provision could only be developed in purpose built accommodation and therefore the training required has not included in the training grids for this project

In the later stages of the project the Disability Equality Duty was being written, the consultation that had taken place with students was used to inform this process

The grid developed for this project will support the DED indicating the full range of training to support students offered at the college

Section 3 – Progress so far

Two grids have now been completed

- Training modules for Academic Staff comprising 52 titles (attached)
- Training modules for Support Staff comprising 40 titles (attached)
- Training exercise for identifying training needs (attached)

All of the staff involved in the project were more than a little surprised at the number of titles that were related to DDA. The exercise has certainly demonstrated to all the breadth of knowledge needed to fully comply with the Act. The project members Pam Clothier Barbara Port Katheryn Skudra and Hilary Allison had all been involved with previous LSDA projects, this was seen as a great advantage as we thought we knew where we were going. Several weeks were lost as we tried to fit this project into a previous LSDA project developed on confidentiality and disclosure. It proved impossible to embed the staff training plan within the timeline from the previous project.

The process was started by a disability analysis of student cohort. This enabled the team to identify if there were any gaps in the training offered to staff. It appeared that all aspects of disabilities that are recorded in the MIS system were covered although there were some areas identified that needed a more focused / specialist approach, particularly in the area of Deafness and Visual Impairments

Both of these issues identified through the project have been resolved.

A deaf Support Unit started operating in September 2005. Eight staff have been employed to satisfy the needs of students. Thirty students are now receiving specialist support. In addition the staff will also develop training courses for staff, students and fee economic courses.

Through the project arrangements were made with the RNIB to deliver staff training in January 2006 on visual impairments. The team are aware that the number of students with visual impairments is lower than the national average and that this needs to be addressed. Without doubt the focus on the project enabled the team to identify the specific gaps

Section 4 – Successes and challenges

The process has identified the vast range of training that needs to be stated and included as “DDA” training. . It has been a revelation as to just how many diverse training sessions are included to date in the grids.

Without doubt the charts will prove extremely useful in the staff appraisal process ensuring that managers and staff understand whether the training offered is appropriate for their job role. It will enable the managers to be more confident and prescriptive in their recommendations

Some of the covert issues are not always obvious to staff or managers when appraising the options. Many staff do not realise that they are actively involved on a daily basis with DDA issues that arise. Therefore some training offered may not appear to be relevant to them. The charts will reinforce the breadth of training that is needed for all staff, to comply with DDA

Examples of this are; for driver’s disclosure and confidentiality is deemed to be essential; for administration staff data protection specific to DDA is also deemed to be essential

As all the training is evaluated and a monitored through HRD this means that lists of attendees can be drawn off so that Managers will know what training their staff have taken specific to DDA4 and empower them to make recommendations

Part of the success of the project to date, I believe is the team and their job roles, which in terms of DDA compliment each other: - Integration Manager, Health and Safety Manager, Diversity and Opportunity Manager and a Student Liaison Manager this ensures all aspects relevant to DDA are covered. It is crucial that these personnel work together to ensure a balanced menu of training that includes all aspects of DDA which in reality are closely linked rather than just the particular, for example Health and Safety. All of the team members are now able to discuss cross issues related to DDA and recommend courses of action to colleagues

Analysis of MIS disability data in turn has become a challenge although not in the context of the project. The college records follow the fields that the LSC require for funding (ISR) purposes; this does not identify or reflect many of the difficulties that students disclose.

A major issue is that MIS does not identify wheelchair users therefore if staff wish to convene a focus group it is not possible to draw down a list for this purpose. Also Aspergers are not included. Inspectors requested data for declaration and support of students who disclosed Aspergers and dyspraxia which is again not listed as a field for the purpose of LSC

The need for specific data from the staff data base has proved problematic and the system will now be updated to comply with the Disability Duty this shortfall of information was discovered whilst developing the project to comply with the new disability duty this issue needs to be addressed.

A recent training addition has been developed following the project teams analysis of complaints the college has received from students and their advocates. The session “knotty Issues” has been developed by the curriculum team, targeting staff that recruit and tutor, addressing the issues highlighted in the research. Not surprisingly the issues were around;- Entry Criteria, Medical Condition, Special Equipment, Personal Equipment, Personal Care, Behavioural Issues, Disclosure, and Admission

A major challenge will be funding the prescribed training, the majority of sessions are led by internal trainers which are low cost delivery, obviously where external trainers are used there is an additional cost. The main area of concern is programming the training so that the relevant people can attend, particularly academic staff and the cost attached to this in terms of cover. The two annual staff training sessions partly address the situation but for those who have a large number of suggested training managers will need to prioritise individual needs

Section 5 – Outcomes and benefits

To date two very focused charts have been developed identifying training by job title on the header, listing the training offered and stating in under each job title column whether the training is deemed to be either mandatory **M**, essential **E** or desirable **D**.

Mandatory training must be completed within six months of employment Essential within twelve months of employment.

The grids can also be used when an unsatisfactory student risk assessment is received this can identify specific training that staff will require to work with particular students

The benefits of this research have been mentioned above in terms of how these activities can enhance staff understanding of the training on offer clarifying their responsibilities and understanding of what needs to be understood.

The research that was undertaken from our complaints procedure proved invaluable in identifying particular training, this training session has been the most highly rated by staff

An unexpected major success has been the collaboration between project sites to share training.

Pre project Warwickshire College was working with another college to improve their inspection grades by putting a tried system in place and training staff (The Warwickshire College Code of Practice).

In return the College, a dedicated provision for Aspergers Syndrome has provided in depth training at Warwickshire College on cross college training days.

Whilst discussing this collaborative arrangement one of the sites stated that they were desperate for Aspergers Training. They were invited to the college training days to meet the trainer and have since arranged training at their venue.

In return for the introduction and training the college will be training Warwickshire College staff on Visual Impairments this will also be delivered at the Aspergers College in return.

This is an excellent example that training does not need to be expensive to be good.

In addition Warwickshire College has arranged training for Senior Management by Bond Pearce (solicitors) who advise the DRC and produced the DVD Court room Drama. The session will look at the new duties added to the Act that the colleges' will have to comply with. All project sites were invited to attend.

The other aspect of the project has been visiting other sites on a recent visit to the RNIB arrangement were made for their therapy students to visit Warwickshire College. I am sure that there will be other spin offs from this collaboration.

6 – Emerging themes

- There is a constant need to develop new training programmes as the DDA develops Continual stimulating staff development is crucial for staff to feel confident that they have the knowledge to fully comply with the act.
- Students have increasingly complex needs many have “labels” which are new, time needs to be taken to understand how and if we can support them.
- Staff need to have the confidence to refuse places to those who pose a threat to themselves, other students or staff (or know who to contact)
- Currently there is a finite pot which is not satisfying the increase in demand for support needs as the act becomes more widely understood, particularly with the increase in students with complex difficulties
- It is increasingly apparent that The Inclusion Manager, The Health and Safety Manager and a range of other staff cannot work in isolation.
- DDA must not be seen in isolation. To a degree involvement on the previous projects cemented this at the college. There were four projects that staff were involved in and it became very apparent that we had to support each others area if we were going to succeed.
- Training offered for Health and Safety must cover issues related to DDA and Visa-Versa to support the process of embedding good practice if we are to exceed compliance.

- The importance of statistics in broader terms. By looking at the complaints received it is possible to analyse whether specific training needs to be developed on a particular topic.
- Involving students in the process by non conventional methods, MIS, the complaints procedure, in addition to focus groups or one to one and team meetings

Section 7 – Useful resources or sources of advice

All of the meetings that have been organised by LSDA have been very enjoyable. It is always of great value to meet others who are on the same wave length working in the same areas of expertise, sharing ideas and good practice.

The regional network meetings have really been excellent. This is probably because they are small and there are a couple of dynamic characters who are more vocal at regional level than at the national meetings.

I personally have not found some the training valuable as I did it last year that is not to say that there is no value for those who are new to Action Research

8 – Key Messages

There has to be a whole college approach to developing training for staff AND students covering all aspects not just the obvious disabilities

Nobody wants to discriminate against a disabled person but it is the responsibility of the institution to train people to understand and enable them demonstrate their compliance

To enable full compliance with DDA staff development needs to fully identify the needs of the student body and relate that to job specific needs

Consultation with students is a vital element of developing training

Evaluation of training is crucial to identify satisfaction levels and further training needs.

9 – Finance

The cost to the institution has far exceeded the allowance given for the project in terms of staff time, it would be unrealistic to include this in the finances.

The project monies covered travel, secretarial time and two away days for the Warwickshire team

10 – Future work

There is still further work to do on the charts when this has been completed they will be piloted in the appraisal system. Prior to this the Disability and Diversity groups will be asked for opinions. Students are represented on these groups. In addition staff are approaching students to ensure that they are being questioned regarding their disability and how staff relate and satisfy their needs. This process may identify further training needs

The annual appraisal cycle commences in May, the evaluation of the individual's appraisal will include a section on the chart. To date through casual discussion with staff there has been total surprise at the amount of training that is designated for their particular area of work.

Additional comments

Because of the nature of this project we have had to stretch the usual bounds of what is considered as consultation. The complaints that we refer to have come via the Principal (letters), tutors and the college complaints system these have formed an excellent addition to developing the training program

Project Title: Staff development required to deliver competence required for DDA compliance
Project No: Warwickshire College (note red denotes original action plan black actual)

<p>Overall aims/goal(s): To further develop time line for actions to include required staff development, documentation and student involvement necessary to deliver DDA compliance (note timeline developed in previous LSDA project) Overall aims To develop a clear training grid for teaching and support staff identifying mandatory, essential and desired training necessary to fully comply with DDA</p> <p>Obj 1 - To develop clear training plan for staff linked to Timeline, identifying training needs for relevant activities. It proved impossible to integrate the staff development plan within the timeline Obj 1 To produce a grid that identifies job specific training for DDA compliance. Audit current training materials</p> <p>Obj 2 - To identify documentation relevant to activity and area. This is directly related to the timeline it was decided that policies were not relevant to this activity Obj 2 Analyse specific disabilities reported via MIS to inform DDA staff development programme Analyse complaints received from applicants/ students and their advocates. Identify commonalities related to training issues</p> <p>Obj 3 - Consult trial group of learners in development of process</p>	<p>Success criteria:</p> <p>1 A Comprehensive chart showing specific training needed for staff, to include Tutors, support staff, outreach and WBT in order to fully understand the implications of DDA</p> <p>1 Produce two working documents that can be used in staff appraisal illustrating Mandatory, Essential & Desirable training for DDA. Make additions where appropriate</p> <p>2 Each activity will have relevant documentation and policies clearly identified</p> <p>2 Student MIS statistics to inform/verify current staff development programme Inform curriculum team of findings</p> <p>3 Learner perceptions will be reported to include a minimum of 100 learners with LDD and/or Disability in the evaluation of student recruitment procedures process, outcomes will be analysed by age, race, and gender</p>
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<p>Obj 3 Discuss and modify through consultation with students and staff</p> <p>Obj 4 - Research & identify suitable evaluation questionnaires for LDD students</p> <p>Obj 4 – Pilot grid through staff appraisal</p>	<p>3 Minutes of access and disability group and diversity group</p> <p>4 A suitable quality questionnaire for use with LDD students will have been identified</p> <p>4 Evaluation of appraisal</p>
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