

**Stroud District  
Local Strategic Partnership  
Learning and Skills Syndicate Group Report**

**Training and Learning Needs  
Cotswold Vale and Stroud Consortiums**

**Background**

The Cotswold Vale (Cam, Dursley, Berkeley and Wotton under Edge) and Stroud Consortiums are partnerships of organisations, agencies and providers with an interest in learning. These partnerships are currently receiving support by the Adult Education Department at Gloucestershire County Council.

It should be noted that although these Consortium come under the Adult Learning department at GCC they are really lifelong learning partnerships made up of organisations with an interest in learning across the board including Crime Prevention, Youth Services, Connexions, Primary Care Trusts, Doctors Surgeries, Family Centres, Social Services and others. *Please see appendix A for partnership lists*

A questionnaire to determine potential learning and skills needs was sent out at the request of the LSP Learning and Skills Syndicate Group to all the members of the Consortiums. The questionnaire asked about the types of clients organisations were working with, their learning needs, how these needs were being met, what the organisations learning needs were, what services and learning was already being delivered and what else could be delivered and how they would like to see learning and training develop in the Stroud area.

90 questionnaires were sent out by email and 11 responded giving a 12% response rate.

**Summary of responses**

**Learners**

The client base of the Consortiums echoes the true diversity of the community, ranging from babies to 90 year olds, employed, self-employed, people from a variety of social and economic backgrounds and with a variety of personal, social and economic needs.

The partnership offers a range of services in addition to training including:

- ? information advice and guidance from 13 to 65
- ? childcare support
- ? telephone helplines
- ? youth support, friendship networks
- ? schools projects
- ? community engagement
- ? career management service,
- ? support and training for people with medical and mental health issues
- ? promotion of textile culture
- ? outreach
- ? day care
- ? repairs and other services for social housing tenants
- ? parenting support and health services

Learning needs of partner clients included vocational, specific employer requirements and sector qualifications as well as initial support into first steps learning, family life, parenting and development of self esteem and confidence.

The partner organisations are meeting these needs by offering client focused, local learning opportunities and support services and referrals to other learning providers and support agencies when necessary. The learning needs which partners identified as not being met included young people not getting the support they needed around motivation and travel, lack of support in a high number of learning establishments for gay and lesbian learners, high cost of learning in some areas, difficulties in having to confirm to traditional ideas about course lengths/hours etc, lack of accredited courses – particularly in Cam and Dursley and most importantly childcare for learners.

Ideas to improve learning opportunities to meet these needs included having small scale training in local areas rather than district focused and increased involvement of employers in determining the sorts of provision on offer, concessionary fees, more support for one to one, sustained funding – particularly for childcare for learners and to ensure that there is relevant provision available for learners to move on to – NVQ level 2 and above offered in the local area.

## Partners Training Needs

Most partners had good training systems in place for themselves and their staff as well as their volunteers and felt their own training needs were being met, however funding was an issue in providing training for staff in the VCS and business management and fundraising were 2 areas where needs were identified. Partners were keen to focus on the quality of their service rather than expand at all costs but felt with the right funding they would be able to meet the needs of more clients.

## Learning and Training in the Stroud District

Partners were keen to add their views on what they would like to see in terms of the development of learning and training in the Stroud District, mainly involvement of local employers with local provision based on what local employers want and small locally based provision, linking organisations and resources so that usage can be maximised, short part time courses as a "way in", learning needs centred around development of value in education and specifically local knowledge of who would benefit, support for course admin and fundraising, learning and training should respond to local needs, variety of different approaches to deliver at times to suit all, crèche facilities are essential, acknowledgment that recreational / craft activities are the first step for many adult to learning and should be given a higher profile, more level 2 courses needs to be made available in local areas.

The following is a record of the actual responses of partners:

## YOUR CLIENTS

### 1. Please give a very brief description of your client base

? 13-19 year olds. We particularly focus in the 16-19 range who are NEET.
? Registered Childminders and approved childcarers.
? People who use our services are in the main Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Heterosexual.
? Working age adults with severe and enduring mental health problems.
? Older peoples groups in rural Gloucestershire
? The whole population that uses a doctors surgery. We target the socially disadvantaged and the mentally ill, also physical disabilities and people who feel excluded – all of whom use the doctors surgery.
? Parents, grandparents and carers of children
? General public
? Parents and pre school children in the community.
? Local people from the Kingshill Estate
? Young parents
? Parents
? Babies, children and young people
? People with mental health issues
? People on benefits
? All members of the local community
? People, who live, work in and visit the District. Primary target audience is local families and children. Secondary target audience is visitors to the district, adult learners and cross sector professional peers.

### 2. What are their learning needs?

? These include basic skills and vocational introductory training in a range of areas. A lack of motivation and unwillingness to travel are issues that we often find.
? Specific childminder training that covers childcare development, business skills, relationships with parents, health and safety in the home etc.
? Our users do not approach us with specific 'learning needs'. They approach us to aid them in whatever circumstances they find themselves in.
? Very varied but basically being able to access mainstream education and training opportunities with support.
? IT, financial, could be anything.
? They need support – often one to one sessions where they feel safe and can be led in to learning. They need gentle support and encouragement in learning. Specifically around creative endeavours.
? Support and information regarding relationships and family life.
? Local history, textile processes, engineering, contemporary craft
? Support with:
? Parenting skills
? Care/education of their children
? Special educational needs of children.
? Life skills
? IT skills

?	Developing own skills/interests to foster confidence/self esteem and future employment prospects.
?	English, Maths, IT, General Work Skills
?	Parenting Skills
?	First Steps into learning
?	Healthy living
?	Support and advice to engage or re-engage back into learning
?	Wide-ranging, given breadth of client group.

### 3. How are you meeting their learning needs?

?	We try to encourage the use of current training (such as e2e), but this does require travelling to the provider (Stroud has the only 2 in this area). Travel costs can be covered. Most work is done on an individual basis.
?	By providing specific childminder training (certificate in Childminding Practice, 3 units) and a wide range of other childcare based training and business skills.
?	By providing a vocational service, supporting our clients in FE and partnership working.
?	If needs arise, they are assessed and then enquiries of appropriate service providers made.
?	By offering a variety of free services, to meet a variety of needs.
?	Children – new education programme to be rolled out in local primary schools.
?	Adults – Historical talks and walks; Demonstrations at Dunkirk Mill; Open Mill events; Information on website; Members' newsletter.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Staff support</li> <li>o In-house workshops</li> <li>o Working with other agencies in community, e.g. health, speech and language therapist, Stonehouse Neighbourhood Project, Stroud College</li> <li>o Bidding for funding to deliver courses, workshops, to work with artists</li> </ul>
?	Providing training which has been asked for
?	Working with GL11 / TLC to house development worker for one day a week to engage more people
?	Close working with other support agencies such as Homestart, Youth Services, Connexions, Drug and Alcohol support, Gay and Lesbian Helpline, Crime Prevention, Next Step
?	Setting up relevant courses in healthy eating / living, alternative health therapies, Stress management and assertiveness, Dependency support.
?	Working with Learning champions to bring people in and to gauge level of support required in community – also supporting learning champions
?	Ongoing and developing public programme of formal and informal learning opportunities. This currently includes OCN Basic Skills courses (in partnership with Stroud College), projects, activities and trails for schools and visiting children, gallery family learning activities and trails, AdEd funded projects for targeted adult and family learners and family learning events.
?	Exhibitions/ displays and text panels are carefully designed and evaluated against access needs.
?	Exhibitions, events and activities are planned and delivered within the MLA's Inspiring Learning for All framework, which includes planning to accommodate different learning styles.

### 4. Are any of their learning needs not being met?

?	A number are still not getting particular support with issues such as lack of motivation and unwillingness to travel.
?	This sector always likes practical hands on activities they can do with the children. We do provide this but they always want more.
?	As far as learning establishments are concerned, whether they are mainstream, neighbourhood colleges, or general provision undertaken by both statutory or voluntary organisations, the bulk of our users feel unsafe to be 'out'.
?	Cuts in funding for adult education have impacted on some clients – increases in the cost of courses (even with concessions) affects individuals on benefits or low incomes and can prevent them moving forward.
?	Intergenerational (as no funding for this now).
?	The situation where ACET are keen that 8 people have 2 hours of education is not appropriate for the delicate learning that takes place in our surgery.
?	Those parents who do engage are offered different methods of learning and support and are signposted to other appropriate agencies and are offered progression through Next Step.
?	We are only able to show a small section of textile processes.
?	Courses, projects – often short term with no prospect of continuity on site.
?	Need more courses with qualifications attached which are relevant to work not just OCN level 1 in Word Processing
?	Childcare is a real issue and there needs to be funding available to pay for this for our learners.

?	We also need more courses at the college for learners to be able to progress onto which are related to the job market.
?	Given the breadth of the Museum's target audience and size of the service, the needs of specific target audience groups are met on a rolling programme of (mostly partnership) projects and initiatives.

**5. If so, how could these learning needs be met?**

?	Small scale training provision in local areas. Increased involvement of employers and improved apprenticeship opportunities.
?	Organisations need to examine their culture and to see if it is truly inclusive. If less than 8% of any employee/volunteer group feel unsafe to be 'out' then organisations have a serious problem to resolve. If they cannot make employees/volunteers feel safe how can they convince any user group that they are accessible and a safe place to learn.
?	I think a concessionary fee of £10 to £15 is realistic for people on benefits and would demonstrate some commitment - £80 for a GCSE is not.
?	Restore funding for these short but nevertheless important projects.
?	More support for one to one sessions would help meet learning needs.
?	We are always looking for new ways of reaching parents/carers.
?	More space – Textile Centre?
?	Sustained funding for learning opportunities and crèche facilities.
?	More availability of a wider range of relevant courses
?	Childcare support
?	Recognition that these learners need a lot of intensive support to get them engaged and to stay engaged but that they will move on and when they are ready there needs to be the provision out there for them
?	Even better partnership working. A long-term learning plan for the District would be helpful, with those involved in delivering learning being given the opportunity to work with policy makers and develop a better understanding of eachothers' roles. This could result in a shared vision and better appreciation of potential future partnership activities. From the Museum's point of view, a good example of this is the area of inclusion. There have been many successful Museum projects addressing this issue and external funding is available but the Museum Service doesn't necessarily spring to mind when decision-makers are planning inclusion strategy.
?	Service level agreements for delivering Museum adult/family learning programmes.

**6. Are there any other client groups you could or want to work with?**

?	13-16 age range at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.
?	Special needs experts to provide specialist training that we could afford.
?	We offer a training service to all statutory and voluntary groups and have recently (in partnership with the County Council) undertaken another promotion of this service. The resulting silence was deafening. To us this indicates the level of prejudice and ignorance that exists, especially when the offer was made in the context of helping organisations bring their employment practices up to standard with current legislation.
?	Our staff are fully qualified to design and deliver training – specialist, general and tailor made.
?	I would not rule out a partnership with other client groups if appropriate.
?	No
?	No
?	We would like to reach all people who look after children, whatever situation they are in. We would like to expand on the success we have had with Men's Groups in Stroud and develop our Lone Parent project.
?	
?	Adults in community who do not necessarily attend the Centre.
?	Young people from the Estate
?	Parents
?	All learners are covered
?	The Museum Service is committed to access for all. We hope that future project work will target the elderly, those with particular disabilities and targeted socio-economic/ ethnic groups/ wards. We are also interested in pursuing school-linked family and adult learning opportunities

**YOUR ORGANISATION**

**1. What do you feel are the main training needs for your organisation?**

?	Our organisation's training manager provides all relevant training to staff.
?	This is not applicable as I (Shirley Crandon) work for Gloucestershire County Council and we have our own in-service training. I need training that will support the childminding sector at a cost the individual self-employed registered childminders can access in their local area.
?	We have a clear process for training our volunteers, staff and management committee members. All

	involved in the Helpline have to undergo initial training over a 6 month period and commit to a further 6 days training annually. In addition, in our recent recruitment campaign for lead volunteers for Friendship Networks in rural areas, these volunteers will undergo specific training for their role and function.
?	Funding, facilitating
?	We have in-house training for facilitators and outreach volunteers and attend CVS and ACET training when suitable. The cost is always a factor in our allocation of who goes to what and when.
?	Training needs may revolve around these issues:
?	Volunteer guides (product information and also health and safety awareness_
?	Project development
?	Fundraising
?	Management of volunteers, increasing numbers and local involvement.
?	PR
?	Textile skills
?	Engineering skills
?	IT skills
?	NB We have not fully engaged in the training aspect but need to as our projects become more complex.
?	Training needs of staff are met.
?	Training for volunteers on how to work with people
?	Business management, fundraising, sustainability of projects, presentation skills, management skills
?	The Museum operates within a range of nationally agreed standards and staff (including volunteers and freelance staff) are required to develop the associated knowledge, skills and expertise. Staff must also become familiar with a whole raft of associated policies, systems and procedures.

## 2. Thinking about your volunteers, staff and managers, what are the skills you are looking for?

?	Committee skills
?	Part of the recruitment process for volunteer and staff members, we undertake skills audits and therefore have a very clear idea of what our skill needs are.
?	See above
?	Good communication skills, preferably a parent, non-judgemental, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the organisation. IT skills, good telephone manner, flexibility. The volunteers are all parents who have benefited from our courses and are keen to give something back to the organisation.
?	IT skills
?	People skills
?	Administration skills
?	Good communication and IT skills
?	Good organisational skills and able to work on own initiative
?	See above. Also, professional staff are required to keep abreast with all relevant local, regional and national initiatives/ standards. These are very wide-ranging.

## 3. Are your training / learning needs currently being met?

?	Yes
?	Currently we are looking at gaining accreditation for our training programmes.
?	Yes, most of them.
?	Generally, yes, within the confines of our budget.
?	Yes in the main
?	No
?	All postholders are required to follow post-specific training and induction plans. The Front of House induction plan has been written in an NVQ style format. Each member of staff is responsible for seeing through their own learning plans. Our main challenge is with training for Front of House volunteers (approx 30) who undertake many of the responsibilities of paid Visitor Assistants. Their role is visitor facing and, as such, they need to be well trained and well informed. However, as busy people they are often unable to commit to attending quarterly staff training sessions.

## 4. If not what could be done to meet them?

?	Affordable, accessible training that can be cascaded.
?	Finding more funding
?	More support for voluntary groups providing this service, recognition of what we are doing and how this is impacting on the services we are involved with and saving them resources in the future
?	Ensuring that volunteer visitor assistants are trained to appropriate levels is a particular challenge, especially in important areas like Health & Safety and Child Protection. We would like to develop learning activities/ programmes that could be undertaken off-site e.g. booklet, video or DVD with follow-up interview or questionnaire. Funding is needed to do this.

## **DELIVERY**

### **1. What is the main service you deliver?**

?	Information, advice and guidance to 13-19 year olds. This includes info on just about anything, providing links to other specialist agencies. Our key specialist area is training, employment and education options.
?	Information, support and training to the childcare sector.
?	We provide a telephone helpline and email service; a befriending service; support groups for women; a roving youth service; Friendship Networks for LGBT people living in rural communities and for older LGBT people.
?	We run 2 volunteer training programmes a year.
?	We provide training to voluntary and statutory organisations.
?	We run a schools project for all schools in the county.
?	We have a programme of strategic and community engagement.
?	A career management service for people recovering from mental health problems – including advocacy and on-going support.
?	Not service deliverers – we are enablers. Although we do offer training to communities.
?	We deliver art on prescription for people with a myriad of medical problems.
?	Our main service in the Gloucestershire area is Parents Together groups (courses and workshops). We also have a national 24 hour telephone helpline, email helpline and can offer telephone groups and individual telephone support sessions. We can also now offer individual face to face support. All our services can be found on our website:
?	<a href="http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk">www.parentlineplus.org.uk</a>
?	We are the only organisation researching and promoting the textile culture of the area.
?	Early education; Inclusive education for special educational needs; Family support; Family learning; Outreach; Full day care.
?	Repairs service for tenants
?	Support services and training for residents
?	Childcare training
?	Toddler Group
?	IT and other courses with crèche
?	Support and advocacy for local people in need and IAG
?	Alternative health and other health services
?	Accessible Museum displays for learning and enjoyment, formal and informal learning programmes, enquiries service, temporary exhibition programme, premises hire (for meetings, exhibitions, events and civil ceremonies), shop

### **2. Could this be expanded? If so, what else do you think you could deliver?**

?	Possibly supported workshops. Also expanding our PAYP programme – positive activities for young people.
?	I can not see that myself or the team I manage, or the other teams I work along side, will ever have the capacity to deliver more training than what we do at this time. However, the Workforce Development team work with other providers to deliver a wide range of training.
?	The service consists of one full time occupational therapist (Gary Thorogood) and 1.5 days of guidance workers. We provide a quality service for people with complex needs and although there are areas we could become involved in (e.g. work retention) I would not want to compromise the existing service.
?	Older peoples groups in rural Gloucestershire
?	We could expand this but would need funding and admin support.
?	We are always looking for alternative ways of meeting parents' needs and we are expanding all the time. We are looking to offer home visits when Health and Safety issues are addressed.
?	We wish to expand to be able to offer textile related courses, and have set up a small weaving studio in Nailsworth at Gigg Mill.
?	Expansion through very likely designation of Children Centre status in 2006-2008.
?	Museum café, possibly in partnership with a community group
?	On-site collections store for improved public access to reserve collections
?	Research room for public use
?	Purpose built education room for improved access to learning, including evening activities
?	In addition to improved learning opportunities and better public access, all of the above would also enable the Museum Service to engage in a more comprehensive volunteer programme, with associated opportunities for learning and development.
?	Resources permitting, there are endless opportunities for expanding the Museum Service's involvement in learning and partnership initiatives.

## GENERAL

### How would you like to see learning and training develop in the Stroud District?

?	Ideally an increase in small local provision, with much greater involvement of local employers. This does however have to be sustainable – there may be periods when there are not enough trainees. Alternatively, improved transport to enable trainees to get to other established training provision.
?	Better targeting of information to my sector (registered childminders) on suitable training opportunities and to see the development of a working relationship with the developing Children Centres.
?	Whilst we are clearly always striving to improve the quality of our delivery, it is clear that this questionnaire has overlooked the possibility that organisations may well have training and learning services to offer others so that the use of local resources can be maximised.
?	It is also clear from our experience that learning provision wherever it is located does not incorporate a wide definition of what Diversity means in reality – otherwise doors to learning will remain shut for a large section of the population if their needs are not taken into account.
?	In this assertion we would definitely include mainstream providers who may well have benefited from using training provision provided by the voluntary sector.
?	Finally, there is also a myth amongst certain sections of the voluntary sector that particular pieces of legislation do not apply to them and therefore it is ignored by the organisation.
?	Short part time courses are often an invaluable starting point for the client group we work with. Although they are sometimes dismissed as 'recreational' they will often be the first step in progression. The majority of people we see are wanting to return to employment – quality programmes such as Key Employability Skills (funded through DWP and ESF) which provided an individually tailored menu for people are very useful. It would be good to see an equivalent of this programme re-instated as it is a definite 'missing link' in provision.
?	Funding for the kinds of projects that still have their place and are still important to those who undertake them.
?	Learning needs to be centred around development of value in education and specifically local knowledge of who would benefit.
?	Also need admin support for forms and also follow on fund raising.
?	How about one designated post for TLC fundraiser.
?	I feel we need to get away from counting bums on seats and look at individuals and what they gain. Quality is more important than quantity.
?	Using a variety of different approaches to deliver at times to suit all participants and more crèche facilities for daytime courses.
?	Learning and training should respond to local needs.
?	Opportunities <u>accessible/affordable</u> in every community with crèche facilities.
?	Acknowledgement that recreational/craft activities are essential first step for many adults to later learning – should therefore be given high profile.
?	Crèche facilities are essential.
?	Wider range of provision relevant to what local employers want local people to learn
?	Childcare during learning is essential
?	Funding to continue first steps and support work with people – otherwise they will not engage and targets will not be met. With this support we have found that people can move through quite quickly onto level 2 courses and into jobs
?	Also more level 2 courses need to be made available in Cam and Dursley – particularly in work based learning – NVQs etc
?	Funding to be made available for individual organisations to meet specific training needs, especially for volunteers
?	Joint training programmes, where appropriate
?	Opportunity for those involved in learning delivery to work together with policy makers (see point 5 under 'Clients').