

nextstep e-newsletter May 2007

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Hello and welcome to May edition of our **nextstep** e-newsletter. The **nextstep** network continues to perform well against its targets and it is very encouraging to read about the West of England's innovative *i-points* CD that help local web-shy people get to grips with the technology that, in turn, opens up job and training opportunities. It was also good to see that **nextstep** has got involved in supporting the Jamie Oliver trainees as they move into the workplace.

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1. **Message from Jon Gamble**

– the Big Skills Campaign

Work on the Big Skills Campaign continues. Some initial market testing on the campaign has taken place and I look forward to giving you more information in the next e-newsletter.

– Implementing Recommendations from the Leitch Review

We are continuing to work closely with the DfES on how the recommendations of the Leitch Review will be implemented – including the introduction of the Adult Careers Service. There have already been a number useful meetings between the LSC and the DfES to look at how we might take this important work forward. I hope to give you more detailed information in the next e-newsletter.

I do appreciate that it may be frustrating that I am unable to give you as much information as you might like to have at this early juncture but I just wanted to reassure you that work is continuing and that we will keep you posted of the key developments and news as soon as I can.

2. **Management Information update**

Well done to everyone for another strong performance. The latest data (March 2007) shows that information sessions and advice sessions exceeded their targets. The target for advice sessions was 207,410 and the actual number of sessions was 380,825 – an impressive 184 per cent against target. The North West performing particularly strongly at 388 per cent against the target – the result of a targeted mail-shot.

Advice sessions to customers yet to achieve a full Level 2 qualification were also above target with 31,117 sessions against a target of 30,239. However, this is still a group that we need to continue to reach.

3. Launch of new nextstep stakeholder/contractor website

We are delighted to announce the launch of the new stakeholder/contractor website. We're sorry it's taken longer than we thought, but we had some technical difficulties at various stages of the new site's development.

The site gives users two points of entry: there's information in brief for stakeholders – and in far more depth for contractors.

You'll also find lots of links to other sites and areas of interest; and most of the key documents are on there.

Log onto: www.nextstepstakeholder.co.uk

4. *i-points*: West of England target the web-shy

Voluntary and community organisations across the West of England can now help web-shy people access vital information about learning, training and work on the internet.

With help from their local LSC, Connexions West of England has launched *i-points* – a new way to access learning and work tools and careers advice, aimed at people over 20.

Plus, because not all organisations have computers to host *i-points*, Connexions, as part of an initial pilot of this project, has a limited number of free PCs to give to organisations where there is a clear need for a publicly-accessible computer to help individual customers.

Adrian Stone from Connexions West of England who has helped develop *i-points* says: 'While most people now have access to the internet, not everyone is confident about surfing the web.'

'Using the simple one-click hyperlinks on the *i-points* CD, people can:

- get help writing a CV;
- take a personality test to give them a better idea of the sort of job which might suit them; and
- even ask for personal careers advice via e-mail.

' *i-points* also taps into data from the National Learning Directory, so people can search a database of all training and learning provision across the country.'

The *i-points* package, produced on a CD which can be downloaded onto any PC, has already been distributed to dozens of voluntary and community organisations in the West of England area, covering Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. A growing number of training providers and local employers have also installed *i-points* on computers in their training centres.

For more information about the *i-points* project or the IAG Gateway at Connexions West of England, please contact Bridget Newbery bnewbery@connexionswest.org.uk or 0117 9074526.

5. nextstep helps Jamie Oliver students

The first group of students from the Jamie Oliver-inspired Fifteen Cornwall restaurant come to the end of their 18-month training programme in May, and are preparing to put their new skills into practise.

To help them on their way, Fifteen Cornwall invited a **nextstep** adviser into the restaurant to give all the students free one-to-one sessions focusing on the needs of the individual, CV advice, and looking at their next career steps.

Mark Scothern, director of the Cornwall Foundation of Promise said, 'We provide these young people with a great start to their working lives by training them to a very high standard in catering. But they also need to know how to sell themselves in the marketplace and present their skills and abilities to potential employers, which is where a service like **nextstep** gets involved'.

Diane Kane, **nextstep** team leader added, 'All the students were very enthusiastic about the training they had received and are looking forward to working in catering. It was great to be given the opportunity to advise the students on how to make the most of their skills and experience and to give them the confidence to take the next step in their career.'

6. Unique Learner Numbers trial update

As you know, there is a trial of Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs), which we're pleased to report is going extremely well.

In the past month, 1,311 ULNs were allocated to **nextstep** customers – which is the biggest batch upload to the trial system. There were only two errors caused by uploading triplets and this would not be an issue in the live system. Well done to the three pilot areas!

You may be aware that the ULN goes live from September - I'm looking for another couple of nextstep contractors to be 'early adopters' of the ULN. If you are interested drop me an email Karen.Milner@lsc.gov.uk

7. Free Skillset workshops for careers advisers and personal advisers

Do you have clients who want to work in film, TV, radio, photo imaging or interactive media? If you can provide a venue, tea/coffee and guarantee an audience of at least 20 people, Skillset, the Sector Skill Council for the Audio Visual Industries, can supply industry speakers and run a free workshop for your organisation.

For more information, please email Christine O'Hara at christineo@skillset.org

8. Evaluation of NRS Products

advice-resources provides guides, diagnostics and databases to support the delivery of **nextstep** and **learndirect** advice services.

Mary D Associates has been commissioned by **advice-resources** to carry out an evaluation of the following products which are designed to support practitioners:

- Guide for Asylum Seekers

- Funding Directory
- Skills and Interest Assessment Tool
- CV Builder
- Disability Awareness Resources
- Guide to Recommended Resources
- LMI Matters
- Library Resource Guide

This is a chance to influence the future direction of these and other products so please do have your say!

Mary will be sending out questionnaires in June and running focus groups in each LSC region. If you are interested in being involved personally by completing a questionnaire or you would like to host a focus group for practitioners then please contact Mary at marydassociates@btopenworld.com or ring her on 07788 655540.

To find out more about these and other products go to advice-resources.co.uk

9. Copies of the Competence Framework

If you would like copies – or extra copies – of the IAG Competence Framework you can get them free of charge from:

Prolog

Sherwood Phase 1

Sherwood Business Park

Amnesly

Notts

NG15 ODJ

Tel: 01623 724000

The reference is: IAG/Folder. But please note the cut-off date for getting extra copies is the end of June. Any copies left over after that time will be recycled.

That's it for this month. See you in June!

Karen

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