

SKILLS CONNECT

Health & Social Care Report



Introduction

Skills Connect provision was commissioned by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and funded through their Gainshare allocation, issued to West Yorkshire in October 2021 to run for 4 years. Yorkshire Learning Providers (YLP) were successful in being awarded LOT 3 Healthcare – Social Care which focused on the following aspects:

- Addressing the widespread pockets of deprivation in the West Yorkshire region and qualification
- Look to address staff shortages for the H&SC sector by providing programmes with clear lines of sight to job opportunities within the sector.
- Upskill the existing H&SC workforce so they can access progression opportunities & pay rises and enhance their career options.
- Programmes for H&SC working with underutilised graduates to gain the skills to enter the workforce and move away from underpaid roles

The programmes were to be innovative and avoid duplication with existing provision in the region and tailored to the adult social care employers. Upskill programme's to be fully supported by employers ensuring a minimum of three employers endorsing the programmes to show need across the region and sector.

The programme was for West Yorkshire residents 19+ both unemployed and employed in the H&SC sector. The target audience for the upskill programmes were small employers with a limit on places allocated to programmes to ensure that the upskills were fairly distributed across the H&SC workforce. A minimum of 900 learners were to participate in the programme as a minimum.

KPI's set for the programme included:

- 51% Females & 49% males (this was across the entirety of Skills Connect LOTs)
- 8% Individuals having a disability
- 16% people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- 10% Over 50's
- 80% Completion rate
- 75% Progression rate



Programmes & Partners

To meet the requirements of the contract, we operated a consortium approach and engaged with a variety of partners including ITP's, colleges and university of Bradford to ensure the right programmes were delivered by the right people, drawing from their expertise and provision offer for the HSC sector.

The programmes and partners for the programme included:

- **Blue Apple Training** – H&SC Passport
- **Bradford University** – Graduate Fast Track to HealthCare Management
- **Calderdale College** – First Time Management in H&SC
- **Luminate Education Group** – H&SC Passport, Introduction to Residential Child Care & Introduction to General Practice
- **Medex** – Clinical Skills for Care
- **Octavia Learning** – Volunteer Pathway to care, Care with Confidence and Refugee Pathway to Care
- **Pathway Group** – H&SC Passport
- **Realise Training** – Transition to Leadership
- **Springfield Training** – H&SC Passport
- **St Gemma's Hospice** – L3 End of Life and Palliative Care & L5 End of Life and Palliative Care
- **Talented Training** – H&SC Passport, Transforming Talent & Advanced Skills for Care
- **Woodspeen Training** – H&SC Passport





Programmes were co-designed with employers, ensuring programmes met need and employers were actively involved in programmes as guest speakers on specific topics to provide the experienced practitioner element of the training which included for particular illnesses and treatment for end of life. We also utilised our relationships with the NHS to provide insights into different care pathways and specific management roles to give a real insight into what would be needed for the role not just in terms of academic skills but also in preparing and applying for these roles.

In order to support a wide demographic of West Yorkshire resident we took advantage of our community outreach activities to ensure the learning was taken into the communities, especially where there is widespread disadvantage, such as provision running in Bangladeshi Youth Organisation to enable those most in need are able to access learning and utilising St Georges in Wakefield as an anchor community venue which enabled Care with Confidence and Volunteer Pathway to Care to be offered to the wider areas with ease. This not only reduced any issues around travel cost but also addressed the challenges around the confidence for some of going outside of the local area or to large training centres and campuses.

We worked with key employers, partners and stakeholders in the districts to ensure a rich and inclusive offer across all of West Yorkshire, including the Calderdale Employment and Skill Partnership (Calderdale Council), Leeds Teaching Hospitals, Bradford Council, Wakefield Cares, Nova, Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust, Halifax Opportunities Trust, Kirkwood Hospice, In2Care and Meridian to name a few! All providing insights, opportunities and acting as co-designers. In some instances, getting involved in the delivery of the programmes to ensure that participants receive all the help and support they need to progress in the sector.

Data

We saw some incredible achievements through the programme which we are proud of for us and our providers. Given that the H&SC sector as a whole is a female dominated sector, we achieved 18% of males onto programme which is a great achievement.

We saw the highest participation in the programme from Leeds and Bradford residents, and Calderdale & Kirklees were fantastic at supporting the creation of small pilots and projects for refugees.

We completely exceeded the original targets set out in the contract, as detailed below:

- Starts – 1958 (217% increase on targets)
- Completions – 1768 (90% of starts and 10% above target)
- Positive HSC Progressions – 1341 (76% of completions and 1% above target of 75%)

KPIs:

- 51% Females & 49% males (this was across the entirety of Skills Connect provision) – Achieved
- 8% Individuals having a disability – Achieved
- 16% BAME – Achieved
- 10% Over50's – Achieved
- 80% Completion rate – Achieved 90%
- 75% Progression rate – Achieved 76%

The delivery partners we utilised for this contract were excellent in promoting opportunities and supporting through to positive destinations. Taking time to link in with key support organisations across the districts was essential, especially for those whom English isn't a first language and those who hadn't worked for a long time and this approach resulted in the incredible impacts we managed to achieve through the programme.

Impact & Lessons Learnt

The programme has been a welcome addition to the region for H&SC organisations who were keen to look at programmes which could be created and delivered with employers at the heart of them. This has also enabled the right level of creativity and flexibility for the providers to move away from the mandatory training and mainstream funded provision to work on shorter and niche areas of learning which have for many shown progression and impact in a much shorter period of time. This approach has proven to have opened up some really insightful conversations into the sector and the needs of the districts.

Flexibility of delivery model has been a great asset due to the demands in the HSC sector, being able to add additional class times or one to one sessions, where staff can't be released due to business need as well as online sessions so no learner is left behind.

We have seen that confidence is a key area of personal growth for individuals. Not just for those as new entrants but also for those for who were completing upskill programmes also, the programmes funded has boosted their confidence, productivity, progression and career prospects.

Through working with partners and stakeholders we wanted to ensure that the programme wasn't purely focused on the clinical/practical side of caring, but also ensuring that time was taken to look at addressing the person-centred approach for example and the 6 C's of care – care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment to ensure we were bringing the right people, with the right principles into the sector to provide enhanced and heightened levels of services and care.

It was identified through speaking with several partners and stakeholders that there needed to be a focus on the steps between carer and manager as this became a significant jump and some of the day-to-day skills this requires and through this programme we supported with the Transition to Leadership offer. This is something that the industry needs much more focus on and not just a short-term investment.

Overall the career progressions have been great on the programme showing real value in the upskill programmes in the workplace. We have seen learners gaining additional responsibilities, moving into management but also moving on to higher level learning which is great to open up further opportunities of progression, as well as increased levels of pay.

Some of the challenges we faced, were mainly due to the speed for programmes to be approved by the Combined Authority, which negatively impacted on our ability to be agile and responsive, and as a result certain programmes did not go ahead. Some care organisations had, as a result, lost interest or staff for the programmes, where the approval process was too long which is something which has been feedback as an area for improvement for future provision.

There were also delivery challenges at particular pressure points in the year due to the pressure on the sector, particularly through winter.





Conclusion

Momentum of support needs to be retained in the locality with the ever-increasing need for new entrants to the HS&C sector in terms of recruitment and retention and the skills of the future workforce.

As a region we will need to see 17,810 additional workers recruited and retained for H&SC and we know people stay where they feel valued and CPD and progression opportunities place a significant part in this. In the recent report “Assessment of Priority Skills” created and published by Skills England, Health & Social Care is identified as one of the 10 sectors of focus for the country which needs a significant focus if we are able to meet the rising needs of the nation, with care workers and home carers being the highest required for additional workers between 2025 and 2030 requiring 90,000 in just 5 years nationally.

There is an average workforce age across the districts of 43 years old, and this also feeds into the need for new entrants as the workforce is aging and will soon face a wave of individuals heading towards retirement. Never has there been more of a need to focus on the H&SC sector and this is something which we hope to see continue in the future.

We would encourage the combined authorities to have a targeted, and well-focussed response and approach to the HSC workforce needs now and into the future, an area we do not currently believe is developed and supported well enough currently.

We want to thank all of our delivery partners, stakeholders, employers and community organisations for their involvement in Skills Connect – this has been a phenomenal programme, with clear impacts, demonstrable positive economic and personal developments and we couldn't be prouder to be the lead of this contract.

A suite of case studies and success stories from those who took part in the programmes, and the most important part of the contract can be found at - www.wylp.org.uk/skills-connect



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