

## Customer Interpreter Ltd

160 Drakefell Rd, London SE4 2DS

020 7277 8566 07885 232390

catherine@customerinterpreter.com www.customerinterpreter.com

# Stimulating Demand for Learning for below level 2 Adults

A report for Learning and Skills Council, Staffordshire and Connexions  
Staffordshire by Customer Interpreter

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Registered office 160 Drakefell Rd, London SE4 2DS tel 020 7277 8566 mobile 07885 232390 fax 020 7277 8566

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# 1 What we did

## 1.1 *The project specification*

The study covered by this report forms part of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Staffordshire's Stimulating Demand Project for Adults in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate whether the wide choice of local adult learning opportunities is being effectively communicated to target audiences in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- To identify the key target audience in terms of their lifestyle, culture, socio-demographics and behaviour.
- To identifying market segments, marketing messages and activities to engage the target market segments.
- To assess the best channels of communication both direct and indirect via influencers i.e. employers.
- To explore opportunities and make recommendations for innovative collaboration between relevant bodies and intermediaries to ensure that marketing and communications better meets the information needs of adult learners and employers.

## 1.2 *Desk research*

We reviewed lifestyle research (based on the Experian "Mosaic" classifications which are explained in detail in section 3.4) for Staffordshire by 9 local authority areas to identify key segments for further research.

In parallel we reviewed existing marketing messages and materials used in Staffordshire to profile messages to check against the needs of adults.

We cross referenced results against other relevant studies we have carried out

- Stimulating Demand work for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Shropshire
- Adult Learning Grant 19-30 focus groups for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)/LSC National Office
- Adult Learning Grant 30+ focus groups for LSC National
- Action for Business employer interviews for LSC South East
- Review of employer research for Apprenticeships Strategy - LSC National Office
- Review of Basic Skills research for the LSC National Office Marketing Strategy

## 1.3 *Field research*

We visited the area and talked to Information and Advice providers. We carried out 10 in depth interviews, reviewed results and then tested hypotheses in two focus groups with IA providers.

We used the analysis from those groups to guide the research work with adults. In this instance we focused on below level 2 adults from the lifestyle groups that had been identified as the most relevant.

We conducted 7 focus groups covering males and females, different age groups and different parts of Staffordshire including special categories eg ethnic groups. (See section 2.1 for full list of 'who we talked to').

From discussions with the LSC Staffordshire team, experience from previous work and the adult focus groups it was clear that employers play a key role so we also arranged 6 interviews with local employers in those sectors identified by LSC Staffordshire as key sectors for growth including Health/Care, Construction and Professional Services.

While in the area we also visited libraries, colleges and information points to understand what is on offer and how easy it is to access.

## ***1.4 Synthesis***

We then analysed all of the information that had been gathered to identify common themes and possible ways to improve what is on offer.

By reviewing existing messages and mapping those against profiles of adults and employers we are able to identify best practice and prescribe ways to improve effectiveness in the future.

## 2 IAG view

### 2.1 *Who we talked to*

It is important in any research to get a cross section of the people involved. We worked with Connexions Staffordshire to identify individuals for the research from varied backgrounds and with various levels of experience.

We talked to:

#### Learning Providers

- Student Support
- Community Colleges
- College Careers

#### Special groups

- Ethnic minorities
- Disabilities
- Dyslexia
- Homeless

#### Other

- Connexions
- Unions
- Jobcentre Plus
- Community and Voluntary groups
- LEA

### 2.2 *The role of IA*

There was considerable alignment between our discussions with IA providers and adults (with whom we talked to later) about the role of the service, the issues facing adults considering learning and the role of communications.

This is in common with front line staff in other organisations - as they are dealing with the public every day, they often have a very good understanding of the issues and needs of the people they meet. What does not always happen, for example in a retail organisation, is that these front line staff are listened to, or there is any system to collect their valuable impressions of the customer / service user.

We developed the image on the right to describe the role of IA providers based on empirical evidence from our field research.

The adults in the huddle are on the opposite side of the river to college. Across the river are all the things they may want if they are interested in progress and self fulfilment.



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The IA service can provide bridges and lifeboats, the colleges can provide outreach back across the river.

But the crucial link is the friendly face, the listening ear, the helping hand. So the first role of IA is to be accepted into the conversation so that an intervention is possible.

The IA provider may have to point out the other side of the river, and encourage the individual to find reasons why it is appealing in order to overcome the difficulties of getting there. The kind of difficulties adults talk about include:

- breaking away from the group - family and peer group pressure to maintain status quo
- choosing a way across - understanding the options well enough to feel confident in choosing a solution
- overcoming fear and a sense of inadequacy - building enough self esteem to overcome negative memories of learning and beliefs about their own abilities
- daring to go in when you get there - self confidence in an alien environment, needing a "buddy" to help them across the threshold
- knowing what to do - clear, comprehensible information about the process

The IA provider is a vital support to the process of persuading low-skilled adults to take up learning and can fill many of the gaps described above.

## 2.3 *IA view of learning*

### 2.3.1 **Benefits**

In order to match the messages they get from the system and the attitude of the people they speak to, with the behaviour and attitudes of adults who could consider learning, we asked similar questions of both IA providers and adults with respect to learning.

The first step in this process is to find out what IA providers feel are the benefits of learning for themselves and for the adults they advise:

#### **Self esteem**

- Increased self confidence
- Develop opinions
- Sense of achievement "*I can do something*"

#### **Skills / Competence**

- Increased job satisfaction
- Practical techniques
- Route to employment
- Do your job better

#### **Place in the world**

- Helps you to experience more
- Broader view
- Meet new people
- Feel less powerless

- More choices

### 2.3.2 Barriers

The next step is to ask IA providers what they feel are the things that prevent the adults they work with from taking up learning. Later we noticed that there is a lot of overlap between what the IA providers feel are the barriers, and what the adults believe the barriers to be. This is a good indication that the IA providers are in touch with their clients and understand the issues from their point of view.

#### “Stuck”

- Same job for whole life
- Jobs not requiring skills or qualifications (backed up by job review in local papers)
- Never needed qualifications for these jobs “I’ve managed for the last 30 years”

#### Self confidence

- Low self esteem “you can’t teach me, I’m thick” ,
- Fear of failure “I haven’t studied anything for years”
- Embarrassed “I’m not ready”

#### Capability / attitude

- Nervous / depressed
- Don’t follow through (say they’ll do it, then don’t)
- No patience
- Unrealistic goals

#### Resistance

- Irrelevant “I don’t need it” , “I don’t need your help, I can look after myself”
- Unpleasant memories “I hated school” , “I messed up at school”
- No guarantees “That won’t find me a job”

#### Practical

- Child care, care of another adult
- Disabilities
- Transport
- TIME: (shift work) “I’ve got commitments”
- MONEY: Cost, loss of benefits, benefits are too high (poverty trap)

## 2.4 *View of the system*

We are interested in how the IA providers feel about the system within which they operate. As with any system, we expect there to be things they are happy with and things they wish they could change. We asked them about both - starting with the positives.

### 2.4.1 What helps

#### Materials

- Prospectuses
- Leaflets
- Dedicated careers materials

## Money

- Learning Support Fund

## Processes

- LSC, training providers
- Matrix Achievement

## Targets

- Action Plan

## People

- The Network, relationships
- Enquiries team
- Council for Voluntary Services

### 2.4.2 What hinders

What are the frustrations for the IA provider? What aspects of the system get in the way of them doing their job rather than supporting them?

## Materials

- Not enough
- Not all appropriate
- Some low quality / copied (basic skills)

## Money

- Funding is too short term
- Cannot afford to extend opening hours
- Changing funding

## Processes

- No progression (after an adult has completed a short course they are not followed up and encouraged to move on to the next stage)
- Bureaucracy, paperwork
- Courses: Lack of availability, timing (Sept)

## Targets

- They feel pressure to choose the quickest route to process an individual rather than the best route
- They observe that these adults take a while to reach decisions, and pressuring them to reach early resolution can be counterproductive
- Focus on up to level 2

## People

- Turnover of volunteers and other contacts (it takes time to build trust)

### 2.4.3 Suggestions for improvements

Throughout all the research with IA providers we were impressed by the level of commitment and strong sense of duty they feel about their job. Many are good networkers and team players and were keen to make constructive suggestions that could help improve the quality of the service. These included:

### **Paperwork**

- One form that follows the learner rather than different forms having to be filled in all the time with the same information.

### **Colleges**

- More flexibility
- More capacity from colleges
- More neighbourhood workers / college in the community

### **Funding**

- Change funding system back to the way it was before
- More consistency, more continuity of funding

### **Marketing in more places**

### **Policy**

- Create joint steering group (LEA, IA, learning providers, LSC)
- Distinguish between basic skills needs and dyslexia

### 3 Adult view

In this section we look at adults in Staffordshire from three perspectives:

- Demographics - who lives here
- Attitude to learning - common ground across all adults
- Segmentation - how to meaningfully segment

There are some general observations to note that affect attitudes to learning (and life in general)

- Higher than average ratio of adults below level 2 in the area
- Traditional communities, family in close proximity which can be a brake on progress
- History of not “deciding” about life choices - “it just happened like that”
- Low aspirations and shortage of role models
- Shortage of opportunities
- Resistance to difference / change

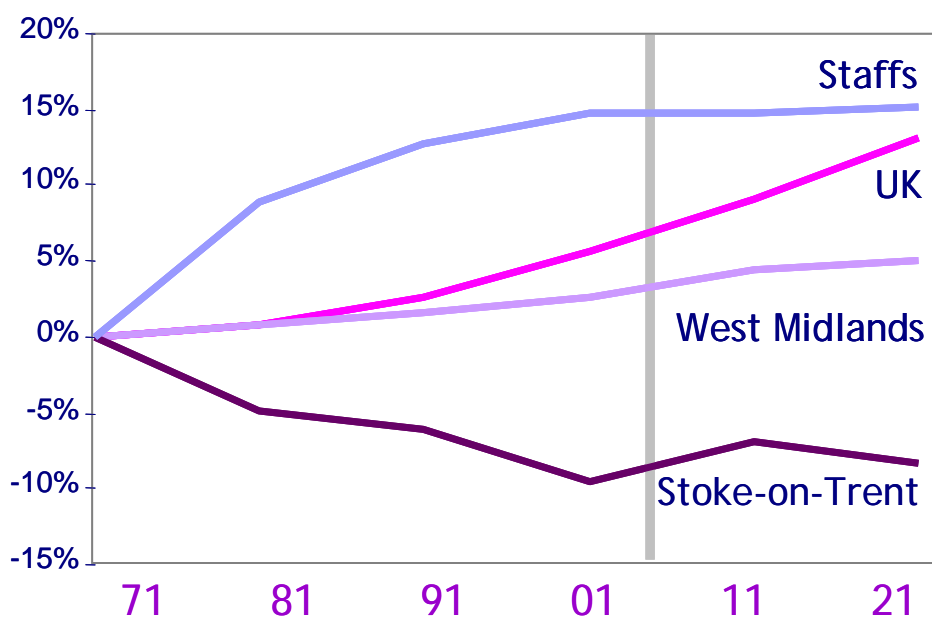
#### 3.1 Demographics

##### 3.1.1 Population profile by local area

	UK	West Midl	Stoke-on-Trent	Stafford	Cannock	East Staffs	Lichfield	Newcastle	South Staffs	Moors	Tamworth	Staffs all
sq km	243k	13k	93	598	79	387	331	211	407	576	31	2713
Male ('000)	2,900	2,600	116	58	46	51	46	59	52	47	37	512
Female ('000)	3,000	2,700	122	60	47	54	48	63	54	48	38	534
People ('000)	59,000	5,300	238	118	93	105	94	122	106	95	75	1,046
% male	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	48%	49%	49%	49%	49%
Density (per km2)	244	408	2559	197	1177	271	284	578	260	165	2419	386

- 30% of the population live on 5% of the land in Cannock and Stoke
- Rural areas like /Staffordshire Moorlands are 15 times less densely populated than Stoke-on-Trent and Tamworth

### 3.1.2 Population change over time



Looking at population data over time gives us other information:

- Stoke-on-Trent: the population decline of last 30 years stabilises over the next 20 years
- Rest of Staffordshire: growth of last 30 years stabilises
- Overall: A stable population in future (despite growth elsewhere in UK)

### 3.1.3 Population age profile

%	UK	West Midl	Stoke-on-Trent	Stafford	Cannock	East Staffs	Lichfield	Newcastle	South Staffs	Moorlands	Tamworth	All Staffs
Pre-school	5.8	5.9	5.6	5	6.1	6.1	5.2	5	4.9	4.9	6.4	5.4
School	14.1	14.6	14	13.2	14.9	15.2	14.1	13.3	14.1	13.2	15.8	14.1
Working	61.7	60.9	61.6	61.8	62.6	60.4	61.6	61.9	61.6	61.2	64.1	61.8
Retired	18.4	18.6	18.8	20	16.4	18.4	19.1	19.7	19.4	20.7	13.7	18.7
Non white		11.3	5.2	2.6	1.4	6.1	1.9	2	2	0.8	1.9	3.0
<b>Compared to UK (% difference)</b>												
Pre-school		2%	-3%	-14%	5%	5%	-10%	-14%	-16%	-16%	10%	-6%
School		4%	-1%	-6%	6%	8%	0%	-6%	0%	-6%	12%	0%
Working		-1%	0%	0%	1%	-2%	0%	0%	0%	-1%	4%	0%
Retired		1%	2%	9%	-11%	0%	4%	7%	5%	13%	-26%	2%

The impact of the job market locally and in Birmingham is clear in the younger populations of Cannock and Tamworth. Many other areas have ageing populations compared to UK averages

## 3.2 Attitude to learning

### 3.2.1 Experience of learning

For many of the audience, they have not had any experience of learning since leaving school. Therefore their reference for learning is school. Unfortunately for the majority, this is not a positive recollection. And the positive memories often have very little to do with learning.

In the tables below we give actual quotes from the focus groups which clearly show their personal experiences.

#### Older men (30-45)

Good	Bad
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of the things I liked there was maths and English. When it comes to maths I was miles ahead of everyone else.</li><li>• From a personal opinion it was whether or not it was going to be useful that's what I always thought. Something like 'Crafts Design and Technology' you could see there was going to be an end product which was going to be of benefit.</li><li>• Things like maths, certain parts of maths you can see the benefit.</li><li>• Other lessons you quite looked forward to turning up for.</li><li>• Yes, most of the time I enjoyed it. I think a lot of my experience is the teacher, if you get a good teacher you are more willing to learn. The subjects where you had a better teacher you found it more interesting and went on to do better at.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We moved down from Liverpool originally, my brother was bright but I really struggled at school, I didn't realise I was dyslexic when I got to senior school, so when I left school I didn't leave with any exams. They didn't give me any extra help because they did not realise. When you're not so bright as your brother you always used to get picked on or something like that. I didn't take too kindly to it.</li><li>• Hated school, I was in the bottom group. I hated everything, school, the teachers, the bullying, I was punished with the cane, I just laughed at them.</li><li>• I hated school and all, I was in school around here, I left about two years early, tried to get work, weren't old enough to work so I just sat round the house I started at secondary school it was diagnosed that I was dyslexic; I had a talent for technology, science and maths. Basically they kept me in remedial English classes all the way through. It was like he's one of the thickos, the stupid people. Stick him out of the way. And I believed them - as a child you do what you're told, you're not allowed to think for yourself.</li><li>• It was sort of at the age that you could sort of give and take some of the lessons you can't stand.</li><li>• Something like history to me it's just like part of life that's gone. History was simply WW2, it was very narrow- minded the way we learnt history, just "this is a fact - remember it". It wasn't interesting.</li><li>• But I have to say that since I've left school I've not seen the partial fraction anywhere in my life. And a simultaneous equation? I won't even go there!</li><li>• But if you get an 'old battleaxe' and think she's off again and just ignore her, you find it boring and you lose interest.</li></ul>

## Younger men (19-25)

### Good

- I enjoyed it just for the mates nothing else, with me mates having a laugh all day, going out with them all, we started going down Newcastle-under-Lyme to the town when I was about 15. I was still at school. I enjoyed it, but not the work.
- I did GCSE's and then stopped school after that.
- It was good when I left
- I used to get away with everything at school I did, when I went I wasn't there very often.
- I sat some exams, maths and English that's it.
- You look back and you think you could have tried harder, the money you're on now. It may not make so much difference now, but in 5 or 6 years time it would give you a lot more.
- The only days I liked going to school was when I had PE really and technology when he had practical. I liked the more hands on stuff, I knew I was going to leave and I wasn't going to go into a job where I would have needed to

### Bad

- The teachers talk down to you
- I just played at school while I was there.
- Yeah, messing about, I got suspended.
- I went to a Catholic school so there was a lot of religion based activities and it bored me to tears so it just did not give me the inspiration to get on with your work, to a degree that's why I think I did not do so well, as well not being bothered. I was so bored all the time.
- I went right through school. Some of the subjects I found easy like me maths and English's it just wasn't entertaining I got bored dead quick sat at the back falling asleep flicking bits of rubber at everyone, ignoring the teacher. But in some lessons when I could grasp I was all right at the end I almost flew by. When it came to the exams I couldn't be bothered with school it was the ones I did not really get they were the ones that were putting me off and I thought I don't want to be here so come to the exam I thought I don't really need them anyway.
- All schools are interested in little details, if you're not academically minded they are not interested in you they put you on a subject that is either easy or they know full well that they can guide you to get a C.
- They constantly teach you the subject material, in my view, that will get you a C that will get you through they don't try to push you any further. It's very rigid.
- My experience of school where I was is that if the teachers did not think you were academically bright they just told you to sit at the back of the room, and all the other ones the teacher's pets were at the front. That's how I felt so that's why I did not take my exams.
- In my school also if you were good at sport you were given the best tuition and that and seemed to be singled out and all the ones who were 'dorks' not we were stuffed the back at the class. I used to play the violin at school and I did maths, everyone thought I was a nerd and others just don't stick in my head.
- It's when you're working that you realise that you were better off at school.
- The problem was getting up, getting there; I liked a few late nights, a few beers.
- I hated the teachers, they pick on you don't they?
- I didn't think school was too bad it was just the same thing everyday, day after day. Most of us went to school,

- use me brains.
- The only thing I liked about school was seeing the girls everyday, that's what I miss now in me job. I go to work and we never see any women.

- but any qualifications you got you don't really use them. I wanted to do more stuff like building, construction stuff rather than maths and English.
- Boring. I just didn't want to know,

### Older women (30-45)

#### Good

- I enjoyed school but only because it was good fun, I never really buckled down.
- I loved school, being with friends I think, school holidays
- It weren't too bad for me

#### Bad

- I hated school.
- I really wish I had buckled down, teachers used to say 'you'll regret it' but you didn't think they knew what they were talking about.
- I hated the teachers. Once you reach that age of 16 you think you're grown up and you're not really. It started from 14-16 I was terrible with the teachers, I did not do homework, I did not want to be told what to do, to hell with revising for exams, but I do regret it. I just wanted to go work where my friends were going and my dad wanted to set me up in business.
- I hated school yeah, I couldn't wait to leave, I just didn't want to be there. I was quite clever but I never could apply myself, I was in the top band for everything, but if I did it well for a week it was a miracle, I hated it.
- I just wanted to be at home, I just didn't want the school aspect at all. I didn't get bullied; I was quite bright in every way but did not want to be there at all. At 15 I didn't feel ready for the exam situation.
- I left with no qualifications or anything.
- I got out soon as I was 16, went straight into machines; it was easy to get work. I just didn't like it, teachers didn't seem to teach, it didn't go in, no concentration I kept looking out the window thinking why am I here. I got loads of mates just didn't like school.
- I just found it a bit hard, I wasn't very clever.
- I still wanted to leave though as a young girl you always want to buy clothes and go to discos and things like that. I wanted to earn money.
- I don't think you appreciate school then it really was the first years of GCSE's and it was such a big thing at the time, so it was nice at the time you think thank God I've done my last GCSE, but 5/6 years down the line you think well school was easy when you compare it to going into jobs and that, it's a very hard life.

## Younger women (19-25)

### Good

- The only lesson I went to was my art lesson, I hated the rest.
- You've got to learn something - as you go through life you don't realise how much you do learn as you get through life you remember things from years back-sometimes you remember something you learnt at school and actually use it for something. At the time you think it's useless but it must sink in.

### Bad

- We got diagnosed with school phobia because we disliked school so much, we had to go and see the school psychiatrist to stop my mum going to prison for 'wagging school'. I hated the discipline, I like doing my own thing. I hated school
- I hated school also and so I went to college to do my GCSE's
- I think teachers are jaded - the ones I had anyway. At school the teachers get treated like crap as well by a % of the kids and it just jades them enough to presume that we're all the same. We used to have some of the teachers in tears.
- If they throw the board rubbers at the kids, or one gentleman there (he wasn't right in the head), he used to look at you right in the space screaming at you and spit come flying at you, then you don't have respect for them.
- As generations have gone on, children have got more feisty, they've got more vocal and they're going to school with the attitude of how they are going to treat the teachers. The teachers are not talking to them how they should be.
- Kids are more intelligent now, they know that they can call the teachers all the names under the sun and they will get away with it.
- I strongly believe that they should bring back the cane.
- School was crap really.
- I hardly ever went, I stopped going at about 14.
- I have no regrets for leaving school I think it's the best thing I ever done, it did cause me depression, having to sign in every lesson.
- I do regret not going to the education standard, progressing through school to get to college, although I've never really needed it for any jobs that I've gone for.
- I did finish school, but I had terrible guidance from school counsellors.
- I was never in trouble or anything, but I didn't enjoy school at all, I used to get bullied quite a lot. I wish I could look back and say I enjoyed school.
- Waste of time.

### 3.2.2 Where learning fits now

#### Low Skills Adults

The priorities for any low skills adult are family (especially those with a partner and/or children) and friends (especially those who are single with no commitments). Their hobbies, goals and plans are geared around these two things.

With one or both of these groups they then have things they enjoy doing - going out (primarily to the pub), shopping and maybe driving if they own a car.

Unfortunately all these things cost money, so that is the driver for getting a job. As many of this group made short term decisions when they left school (cash in hand today rather than any plan for the future), what looked like a reasonable income for a 16 year old may be difficult to live on as an adult, especially if there is housing and families to pay for.

#### Necessary Conditions

So those adults who may be convinced that learning has a contribution to make to their lives need to be at least one of the following

- Able to reduce working hours to train (windfall or empty nesters)
- Convinced that learning will bring salary increases or personal benefits
- Sponsored by their employer
- Not currently working and able to start studying without compromising benefits or family duties

This situation is compounded by some of the local factors

- Lack of higher skilled jobs (opportunities)
- Homogeneity of the area (so easy to carry on with the status quo)
- Low aspirations

In short, learning is not a priority, especially when coupled with often very unpleasant memories of school. Therefore it will take significant shifts in perception for adults in this situation to feel that learning will improve their lives or solve their problems.

Having assessed this situation it is however not impossible to open the minds of these individuals to learning. As we will see later, there are trigger points that can help, and segments within this overall group who are more open to the concept of learning. Focusing on these better prospects, the important issues become:

- getting the message across (marketing)
- supporting the decision making process (IA providers)
- delivering what is required (learning providers)

### 3.2.3 Barriers

It is important for us to understand what the adults feel are the barriers stopping them from learning. Some of these are real and some are perceptions - which feel real to the individuals concerned. There is some variation depending on where they are in their lives so the barriers have been split up by age and gender. Verbatim quotes from the focus groups have been included.

## Older men (30-45)

- Lack of interest  
*"Coz we don't want to do it"*
- Fear  
*"You fear you're not going to be accepted by the others. That's the hardest thing with me. It's a bit of a worry."*
- Time  
*"Life takes over, work and the family and before you know it it's a year down the line and you've done nothing about it."  
"It's very difficult to sit down and say well o.k. I'm going to commit myself to one night a week, for 16 weeks or whatever, I just couldn't do it, I know that after a few weeks it would all go to pot."*
- Money  
*"There's always cost implications with any training you look at and generally we've always got something better to spend our money on"*
- Not relevant  
*"Well there's no point learning something that wouldn't be of any benefit to you"*

## Younger men (19-25)

- No guarantees  
*"If at school they said you get this qualification and this is the key to something to get £50k a year or whatever fair enough."*
- Fear  
*"It seemed like a big decision - another 4 years at college, I don't know, some people say it's like school, some people say it isn't, I don't know."*
- Time and money  
*I hate it, it's giving up your night as well, and if you're giving up a day at work then you lose pay. It's giving up one of them two. When you're young like you don't want to do it, getting back at 10 o'clock at night from college.*
- Timing  
*"I think you have to catch the right time of year at the beginning of the year, I just missed out so I think I'll wait until next year now."*
- Course capacity  
*"Yeah, coz one of the lecturers said to me we'd love to hold three of these classes instead of one, however, we are limited by the government as to how many we can do, because of government funding. It's things like the government are not really helping;"*
- Lack Of Guidance  
*"I'm prepared to go into college full time; I just need to know what to do. I'm trying to find someone to help - it's just a complete mess. Where do we go?"*

## Older women (30-45)

- Confidence

- "It's time that I started looking around but I've lost me confidence. I left school at 15 and now I'm 32 I've got no confidence at all"*
- Not Relevant  
*"I'd like to learn something but then I think what's the point of learning something when I don't want a job?"*
  - Fear  
*"We can talk to you but if you were interviewing me I wouldn't open me mouth! In case I say the wrong thing, I'd feel stupid."*
  - Money  
*"I'll tell you why I have not done anything about it, it's financially really. There's that as well really. I go to work and we rely on my wages as well."*
  - Time  
*"You could probably do that sort of thing when the kids have grown up and flown the nest, you'll have more time on your hands and you're probably financially better off then. You hope to be anyway?"*
  - Age  
*"I always think as well that by the time I done it, I'd be too old to get employed."*
  - Kids  
*"You've got to spend a few years doing it and in the meantime your family are at home and need sorting out. The guilt wouldn't let you concentrate I don't think."*
  - Location  
*"It has to be local - I don't drive, I have to get on a bus."*

### Younger women (19-25)

- Childcare  
*"I was supposed to go back to college this September but it did not happen as my son is under a year and a half he can't get into the crèche, so I've got to wait until next year now."*
- Money  
*"I would love to go back to college, there's so much I want to learn about, but courses are so expensive."*
- Time  
*"Probably when the kids are older - when you've got a family you don't have the time."*
- Kids  
*"I wouldn't want to start work until the kids are at school; I just want to spend as much time with them as I can."*
- Self confidence  
*"I wouldn't walk into a classroom now, full of people."*
- Not relevant  
*"For me by the time the evening comes and the kids are in bed and I've tidied up I really don't feel like going and sitting and doing something that there's not really any point to."*

### 3.2.4 Benefits (the buzzwords)

We asked adults to describe for themselves what the benefits of learning would be. These buzzwords are an important tool in talking to these individuals and helping them to decide about learning. It is tempting to talk about our own buzzwords - what we feel the benefits are - but as we know from previous work, it is much more effective to use the words that have come from the people we want to help.

These vary by age and gender so they are listed separately in the same way that the barriers are in the section above. The verbatim quotes are important as the more exact the language matching, the more likely the statement is to influence the individual.

#### Older men (30-45)

- Satisfaction  
*"To me it's an achievement; you get a lot more satisfaction"*
- Achievement / revenge  
*"To be perfectly honest it's the sense that I'm kicking sand in the face of people who stayed on at school and did their exams"*
- Money:  
*"If I didn't have to learn I wouldn't, I need it to get somewhere. I'm choosing to learn, it will get me more money, get me out of the house."*
- Confidence:  
*"It gives you more confidence as well meeting individual people and you know you can survive in the real life."*
- Progress:  
*"I sometimes look back and think that I should have got qualifications; if I had them I would have gone further."*

#### Younger men (19-25)

- Progress / More Options  
*"I'd like to try to push a career now rather than pushing pedals, I want to try and do something"*
- Money  
*"More money for the family and everything."*
- Interest  
*"Something not boring, interesting subject, something that you think you're going to get something out of."*
- Girls  
*"Might meet some girls! I don't see any at work, I miss that about school".*
- Confidence  
*"Yeah you'd feel more confident wouldn't you, when you've got the trade you could go out and explore and do what you want."*
- Satisfaction  
*"Self-satisfaction, like you've actually put yourself out to learning something, something you like."*

## Older women (30-45)

- Self Esteem / Confidence  
*"I just think that having the knowledge you get more confident. You can talk to different people."*
- Personal Growth  
*"It broadens the mind and enables you do things you couldn't before."*
- Sense Of Achievement  
*"Like when you pass your driving test - you've actually achieved something."*
- Better Future  
*"As you say you've got to have that little bit of qualifications behind you to push it and a bit of confidence as well to go for it. Sometimes it's not just the money you want to step into a new job just for a change, a stimulus; it would be better than what you're doing at the time."*

## Younger women (19-25)

- More Options / Prospects  
*"If you are taught well you can get a load of things from it, it's just finding the people who are going to teach you properly. You would get your qualifications, that get you a decent job."*
- Self confidence  
*"It gives more confidence."*
- Independence  
*"You don't want to live off your husband's money."*
- Personal Growth  
*"I think education opens your mind to other possibilities no matter if you are going to use what you learn or not education of one form or another is good it keeps your brain active."*

### 3.3 Segmentation

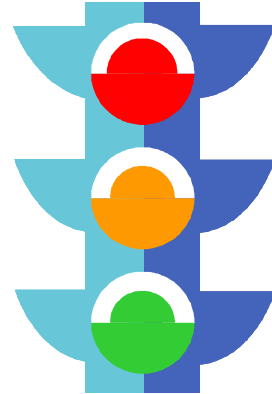
Not all adults are the same. Traditional segmentation relies on demographic factors such as age, gender, social category, geographical location) but this is not a meaningful way to segment on an issue-based strategy development. In any case, engaging in learning is a much bigger decision than trying a new shampoo or type of frozen food).

As one respondent said when asked why he and people like him were not currently in learning

*"Coz we don't want to do it"*

Attitudes to learning vary widely, and we have used a simple traffic light system to identify where an individual lies with respect to learning. This system has been used in various relevant LSC marketing strategy developments such as Adult Entitlement and Apprenticeships.

- STOP:  
feel unable to learn, uninspired, demotivated, trapped  
"The main barrier to learning is not wanting to do it"
- WAIT:  
floating voter - could be persuaded or could drift back to the STOP crowd (the huddle on the left side of the river in our earlier illustration)  
"I'd like to learn something but I don't know what"
- GO:  
keen to learn but need IA support to choose the right track  
"I'd love to learn something new"



We are going to look at two factors affecting where an individual falls in the STOP / WAIT / GO segmentation:

#### Lifestyle (Mosaic category)

The way you live will make it easier or harder for you to go for learning

#### Age and gender

Trigger points during your life

How the dynamics differ for men and women

### 3.4 Lifestyle data (Mosaic)

#### 3.4.1 What is Mosaic?

We used Mosaic data to understand the main lifestyle groups in Staffordshire. Mosaic is a classification of neighbourhoods down to unique postcode - which represents about 15 houses. Experian, who manage the Mosaic data, base their analysis on income levels, family structures, housing type, social and consumer behaviour which they gather from census data, consumer questionnaires, purchasing information and other statistics.

Using cluster analysis, Experian have identified 63 Mosaic "Types" of neighbourhood and each postcode in the UK has been classified according to this. Typically a Mosaic Type represents 1-3% of the UK population, though of course the types are not evenly distributed around the country.

#### 3.4.2 What can we do with it?

We use the Mosaic Types in the following way:

- See which ones are most significant in the area (% of population)
- Assess the larger ones for likelihood of having level 2 learning needs
- Run focus groups with the Types that are both sizeable and high likelihood of low skills
- Identify the needs of those Types
- In future, there is the potential to tailor messages to the Types and deliver eg a targeted message by postcode area

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By giving these classifications relevant names and providing a pen portrait of a typical couple in each classification, it is possible both to understand each group and to identify the most effective way to communicate with them (for example by knowing which papers they are likely to read).

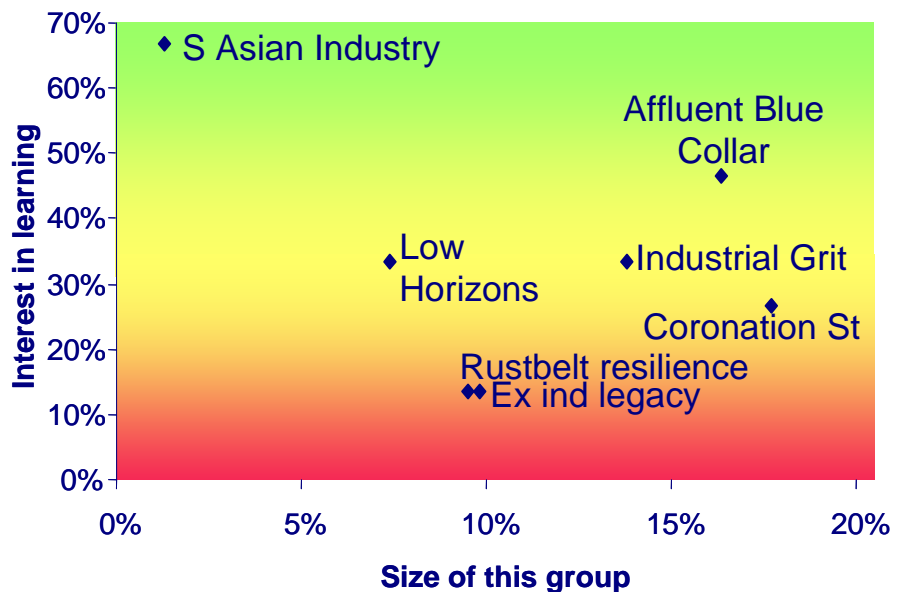
### 3.4.3 Mosaic Types in ~Staffordshire

We reviewed all Mosaic categories and rated them for importance in the local area (% of population) plotted against likely attitudes to learning. The colour of the chart corresponds to the traffic light system above, so a group high on the chart on the green zone are more positive about learning (GOs), and a group low on the chart in the red zone are STOPs and resistant to learning. The chart below shows the groups that come out as most relevant in that exercise.

South Asian industry is a particular sector with specific needs. As they are high on the attitude to learning scale, they are also likely to need information rather than guidance, to finalise their decision.

We therefore focused more in-depth research on these key groups

- Coronation Street
- Affluent Blue Collar
- Industrial Grit
- Ex-Industrial Legacy / Rustbelt Resilience
- Low Horizons



Below we give an explanation of these key groups - including local housing of the type expected in this category, and localisation of media preferences.

#### 3.4.4 Affluent blue collar

- Size: 7% of Staffordshire (compared to 3% of UK). Especially Tamworth (14%), Cannock (11%) and Stoke-on-Trent (9%)
- Social category: C2
- Housing type: Spacious owner-occupied semi detached houses with at least 3 bedrooms. These houses usually have gardens and were



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- often built 50 years ago near to heavy industry (eg mining, steel)
- Typical jobs: decent wages in unionised industries plus shift work. Craft / technician skills. Semi skilled / supervisory roles
- Papers: Advertiser, Tamworth Times (also Sentinel, Tamworth Herald, Sun)
- Pro learning: especially mid 20s males and older women

### 3.4.5 Coronation Street

- Size: 6% of Staffordshire (3% of UK). Especially Stoke-on-Trent (15%) and East Staffordshire (7%)
- Social category: D (C2)
- Housing type: Low cost Victorian terraces (2 up 2 down), usually out of the town centre and a bit further from facilities
- Typical jobs: traditional industries (mining, potteries), office jobs, bus driver, council labourer, disability benefit
- Papers: Advertiser, Reporter, car magazines
- Harder to convince on learning unless seen as a way to improve lifestyle



### 3.4.6 Industrial Grit

- Size: 5% of Staffordshire (4% of UK). Especially Cannock (8%), Tamworth (7%) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (7%)
- Social category: C2 (D)
- Housing type: Large owner-occupied early 1900s terraces and 20s/30s semis (comfortable, unpretentious), often in ex-mining areas
- Typical jobs: manufacturing and assembly on new industrial estates created to replace mining jobs
- Papers: Tamworth Herald / Extra
- Women are more likely to consider learning, males are too settled



### 3.4.7 Low Horizons

- Size: 4% of Staffordshire (3% of UK). Especially Stoke-on-Trent (8%)
- Social category: D (E)
- Housing type: 40s/50s Council semis on outskirts of towns
- Typical jobs: unemployed / low skilled manufacturing eg assembly line or service sector eg call centre, council/hospital



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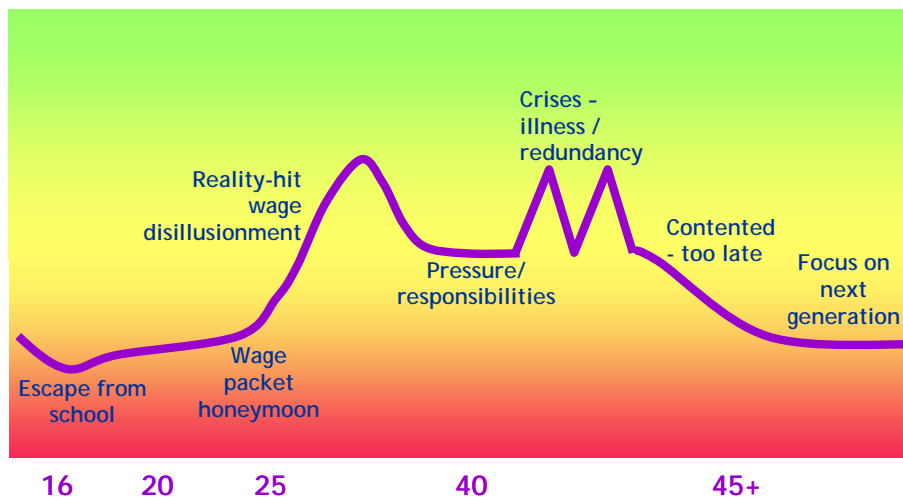
- Papers: Trader, Advertiser, Burton Mail
- Learning possible as a way out of current state, but need to believe, and good IA re benefits, job prospects etc

### 3.5 Age and gender

As well as being influenced by where we live and the people we associate with, adults face various events in their lives, which make them more or less open to the idea of learning. These events are not the same for men and women, so we have analysed them separately. This research on trigger points was carried out for LSC national office early in 2004. There is a strong correlation between this analysis and what we saw in the focus groups in Staffordshire.

Trigger points are a useful tool to identify times when interventions may stand the best chance of success in order to optimise resources on those individuals most likely to take up learning.

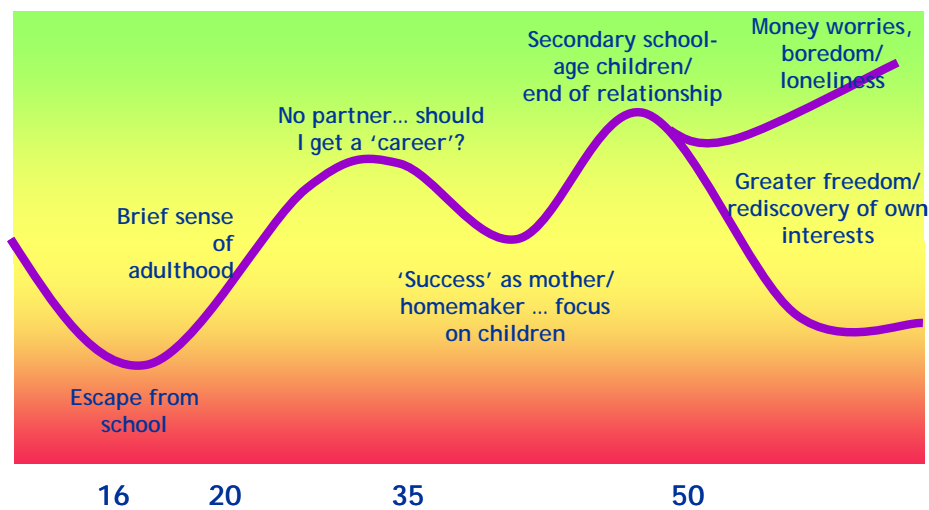
#### 3.5.1 Trigger points for men



For men, it is noticeable that the only times they become GOs are when they face some kind of crisis.

The first time that happens is in their mid 20s when they realise that their minimum wage will not sustain the life they want, and that they have lagged behind on training opportunities and may have reduced their own marketability in the workforce. If this happens before they have acquired financial commitments, there is a possibility that they can be persuaded to use learning as a route to improving their prospects.

### 3.5.2 Trigger points for women



In general, women remain open to the idea of change, including learning for a greater portion of their lives. There is much debate on the reasons for this, but one possibility is that as those often bearing prime responsibility for raising children, they are naturally faced with more decision points during their lives, such as "*Shall I have children?*" "*When is a good time?*" "*Should I give up work?*" "*How long for?*" and so on.

## 4 Marketing learning to below Level 2 adults

### 4.1 *Background to Language and Behaviour profiling*

In 1951 Noam Chomsky delivered his PhD at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), on Transformational Grammar which focuses on how people modify the information they receive from many sources and then communicate that with an overview that passes on 1-2% of the original information they had received.

That work was then further developed by Rodger Bailey as the Language and Behaviour (LaB) profile, and we have customised this approach for adult learning and used it in this and other LSC studies. It focuses on how a person translates that experience into communication on the subject and how that gives clues about the way they feel about the subject.

Our conscious mind decides WHAT we want to say about a subject. Then our subconscious mind (about 3,000 times faster at processing) chooses a way to say it. By identifying the tendencies in the way a person speaks about something - in this case learning - we can begin to understand their feelings and attitudes - and subsequently ensure that we talk to them in a way most likely to have the right impact.

Language and behaviour profiling does not tell us the personality of the individual, but it does reveal a lot about how they feel with respect to a particular situation - in this case the idea of learning. By identifying their language profile we can influence their behaviour and help them overcome the barriers that are coming between them and learning.

### 4.2 *Language and Behaviour profile in Staffordshire*

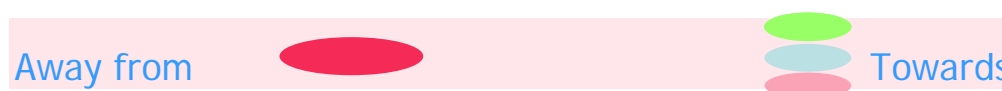
We have summarised what we learnt from profiling IA providers, adults and materials in Staffordshire in this section

Note that the key for all of the diagrams in this section is:

STOPs   
GOs   
Messages   
IA providers 

#### 4.2.1 Away from - Towards

The first part of the profile measures the DIRECTION of motivation of the individual with respect to learning.



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Asked about the benefits of learning, adults not currently considering learning are likely to talk about getting **away from** problems rather than **towards** goals.

*"Well it saves you getting bored"*

*"It stops you getting left behind"*

*"It might make you feel a bit less stupid"*

IA providers, current messages and adults very interested in learning, all tend to be more **towards** in their thinking. If the messages are shifted to respect the **away from** motivation of most adults not engaged in learning, they are more likely to have the desired impact.

The sort of messages that would work well for this audience need to be away from, and reflect where they are on the lifelines discussed above. For example:

#### Younger men (19-25)

- Don't get stuck in a dead end job
- Don't get left behind

#### Younger women (19-25)

- Don't get trapped
- Don't lose your confidence

#### Older men (30-45)

- Don't waste your skills
- You're never too old

#### Older women (30-45)

- Don't let a lack of confidence stop you from developing skills

## 4.2.2 Proactive - Reflective

This measure tells us about the style of decision making displayed by the individual in the context of learning.



A **proactive** individual will have animated body language, may get fidgety or look bored after a few minutes and speaks in short sharp sentences with lots of action words.

*"I'd rather just get on with it. So I signed up for an NVQ in travel and tourism. But after a while I realised I didn't like it so I dropped out"*

A **reflective** individual on the other hand will do just that - reflect. They will consider your questions, use passive tenses and leave sentences unfinished and hanging in the air.

*"I've been thinking about learning for some time... but I haven't got round to doing anything yet"*

Regardless of age, the individuals we spoke to who are doing something about their learning were **proactive** - they have identified what they wanted and are beginning to sort it out. However many people not in learning that we spoke to are very **reflective** - they can consider learning for many years but never make a move to bring it about.

Examples of messages that can help with this group are

#### Younger men (19-25)

- You may have been thinking about what to do for some time

#### Younger women (19-25)

- You can consider what is available and then decide what to do

#### Older men (30-45)

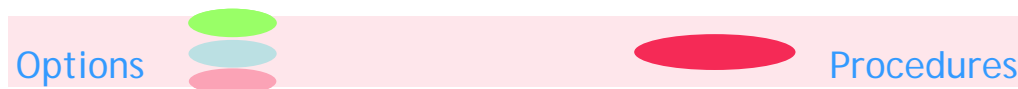
- Maybe you have been feeling that you want to do something but feel you're too old?

#### Older women (30-45)

- You might have already thought about taking a course but not known where to start...

### 4.2.3 Options / Procedures

When we look at this dimension, we are looking at the way the individual thinks about their choices.



**Procedures** people like processes, clear steps and a “proper” way to do things. They are more comfortable knowing that they are going through a procedure with their adviser, which will start with a first step, than with the idea of an exciting exploration of a wide range of opportunities (which would worry them).

If asked why they did something, they will answer a question by telling a story explaining HOW not WHY

*“Well I realised at school that I didn't really like a lot of the ... and then... and then...”*

We saw some tendency to **options** among the young people (under 24) that we interviewed. They have grown up in a world of options and are worried about losing out. They are looking for reassurance that by choosing to learn something they will be INCREASING their options not reducing them. They also need support from IA services to make sure they don't get lost among the wide range of options, and progress through them to a decision.

*“I can't really make up my mind what to study, so I haven't put my name down for anything yet”*

This can be quite a barrier for them as they are also **reflective**. So they are very aware of the negative affect of making a choice (limiting options, closing doors) and may procrastinate for ever. Even very talented young people can fall into this trap without careful guidance - the very fact that they could do anything they wanted makes it very difficult for them to make a choice.

For this group, key messages are:

#### Younger men (19-25)

- increase your choices
- 50% off if you enrol this week

#### Younger women (19-25)

- it's your choice
- Increase your options

However most low skilled adults are **procedures** about learning. They want to know that there is a step by step process that they can follow. They are reassured by the presence of a guide (IA) and recognised brands (**nextstep** can build this recognition as “the right people to talk to”). The sort of messages that can work well with someone in this place is:

#### Older men (30-45)

*Your first step is to discuss your needs with a nextstep adviser*

#### Older women (30-45)

- Step one: think about what you would like to study
- Step two....

### 4.2.4 Sameness / difference

This tells us about the comfort zone of the individual - their tolerance of change and their appetite for new experiences.



Somebody who has a tendency to **sameness** will tend to make a voluntary major change to their life about every 25 years. These are people who feel threatened by change and don't see why anyone should change the status quo. If they are forced to undergo a change, they look for similarities to help cope with the change.

*"I've been in more or less the same job for ten years now. Of course I've changed companies twice... but it's pretty much the same"*

Current messages often talk about newness - a new job, a new experience, something completely different. That is attractive to those individuals who are GO about learning, but can be alarming for the others.

An individual motivated by **difference** on the other hand loves things to be new and exciting. They look for new experiences and welcome change.

*"My job is different every day. Every time a new customer comes into the garage or I work on a different car I have a new challenge."*

A more common pattern is to see things in the context of what is, and what has changed. This is known as **sameness with exception**. Key words are “more”, “less” and other comparative statements. They need to feel a sense of progress, not step change but progression along a continuum.

*"My job is similar to when I started, but as the company has grown I've taken on more responsibilities"*

Any marketing activities need to have an element of difference in order to get some standout and attract attention. However this would be better achieved by the look and feel of the message than the content if we are to be heard by the majority of adults.

Examples of messages that may convince reluctant learners:

#### Younger men (19-25)

- Increase your skill level

### Younger women (19-25)

- Meet people like you, do something you're interested in - and get a qualification

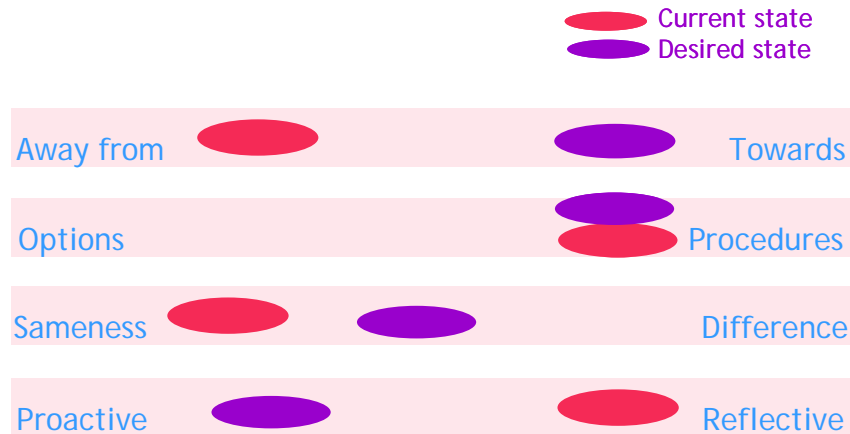
### Older men (30-45)

- Build on your existing skills

### Older women (30-45)

- use what you already know to get a qualification

## 4.2.5 Shifting from current to desired profile



As we have seen, the dominant trends for low skilled adults, when thinking about learning, are

- AWAY FROM: motivated by solving problems rather than achieving goals
- PROCEDURES: like a step by step approach of what to do next
- SAMENESS: do not want big changes - or even small ones - in their lives
- REFLECTIVE: more likely to think about something than do it

This pattern is typical of any individual who is stuck in a problem state. The job of IA providers and marketing communications is to help them to move from this state towards the desired state where they decide what they want out of life and work out how to achieve it.

What is critical is that any conversation with these individuals starts from where they are currently at (current state) and talks about it in the immediate past

*"So as I understand it, you have been feeling that you cannot start any courses because you don't have the self confidence"*

This helps to create a slight disassociation with the problem state. Having established their buzzwords for the desired state (eg learning increases self confidence) we can then seek agreement from the individual that this would be better:

*"...and it would be good to get to the stage where you do feel able to start a training course because then doing the course and getting the qualification would increase your self confidence and make it easier for you to get the life you want"*

IA clearly have a critical role to play in helping the individual to make the shift from the current state where they cannot solve their problem, to the desired state, where they can take action.

## 4.3 Communications

### 4.3.1 Buzzwords

The first thing with any conversation or marketing message is to get the attention of the audience. To do this we have to talk about something that interests them. This is unlikely to be *learning* particularly as that conjures up unhappy memories of school for many of them. As part of the development of the LaB profile, we find out what the individuals feel they would get from learning; what learning would have to be like in order for them to consider it.

Here are the buzzwords used by this audience which identify what learning would have to be in order for them to be interested.

#### About me and my life

- Find the real you (women)
- Give it a go (men)
- Find a new job
- Time for you to learn
- Adult, mature
- Flexible
- Part time

#### About my worries

- Computers
- Gaps in English and maths
- Finding time and money to learn

#### Not expensive

- Free (women)
- Cash (women)
- Might be free (men)

#### Offering information

- Open day
- Substantial enough (if written material) to look like it contains all the info

#### Known brands

- learndirect
- BBC
- Gremlins (but they are a problem for many adults who see them as patronising or unkind)

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### 4.3.2 What not to communicate

By testing over 70 messages we were able to understand, across the groups, what works and what causes immediate rejection. The following are the messages that are often rejected by low skilled adults:

#### Not for me (any of these words are off-putting for adults)

- Students
- Basic skills
- Full time
- School
- Learn
- Effort
- Breakthrough
- New / different

#### Dull / difficult

- School (boring, horrible)
- The word "learn" just puts you off, you can't be bothered, makes it sound like there's effort in there and no one wants effort

#### Suspicious

- Government:  
*"If I saw that "Department for Education and Skills", I would just throw it in the bin. I have no faith in the government, so government endorsement does not impress me. A government department it's faceless, there's always an ulterior motive with the government."*
- Free (men):  
*"As soon as it says money you think there's a catch. You don't get nothing for nothing do you? "*

#### Scary (too much difference)

- Step into a new job
- break through
- revolution

#### Jargon

This means nothing to them and makes them feel even more excluded and convinced that whoever is writing the leaflet has no idea about their lives.

- IAG
- ALG - Adult Learning Grant
- IT
- Bitesize (which for them means cramming for their GCSEs and is not related to the Bitesize courses)
- Foundation course

#### Not for me

- Students

- *"Looks like it is for young people"*
- Anything patronising  
*"Revive your ambitions"*
- Basic skills  
*"Makes it sound like you're not very bright"*
- Full time  
*"Means no work - you won't get paid (older)"*
- Evening  
*"No, that's beer time (younger men)"*

### 4.3.3 DOs and DON'Ts in communication with this group

#### DON'T

- Patronise the audience or dismiss their current status as a failure. They know they could have made more of their life, and don't like to be reminded that they need a second chance.
- Use jargon (eg level 2, IAG)
- Over-promise (eg "FREE" as main headline then "subject to terms and conditions" where that is likely to rule out most enquirers)
- Be too upbeat and goal oriented about learning.
- Use black and white
- Photocopy materials, especially for audiences with low self esteem
- Have photos of smiling people on the front of the brochure. If you need to include photos of people, they are more acceptable to the audience if they are engaged in an activity
- Use a confusing and busy layout - they are procedural about their learning and want a straightforward route through the information
- Use jokes or celebrities like Frank Skinner as they feel their problem is being trivialised. The exception is young men (19-22 years old) who enjoy this approach.

#### DO

- Talk about things that are of interest to them in order to begin the conversation. Later it can get on to the things we want to talk about
- Use their language - the buzzwords and phrases that are most likely to be recognised by them as benefits of learning (as covered in section 4.3.1)
- In printed materials use bright colours with a strong design and good quality production values. Have a simple clear message on the front of the booklet and plenty of structured (step by step) information inside so they can feel confident about the subject before approaching an adviser or provider
- They will appreciate a free phone number, but need enough information first so they do not feel too exposed when making that call
- Frame messages according to the language and behaviour profile of the audience
- Use recognised brands (eg learndirect) and build brand recognition of nextstep by using it consistently
- Case studies are useful for confidence building with women but may not help with men as they can generate envy and then rejection
- Consistently use the nextstep logo, branding and key messages in order to build brand recognition as quickly as possible

### 4.3.4 How to get the message across

We talked to adults about what would be the best way to get the message across to them. There is a general perception that there are too many leaflets and nobody reads them anyway. For an audience that is not highly literate (as is the case with many of this group - even if they are able to read, it is not a popular pastime) then written materials may not be the most effective tool.

#### Face to face

These people place great value on face to face communication and are most likely to be persuaded by someone they know, or someone they can relate to, having a conversation exploring possible ways forward. This could be a neighbour who has begun learning, and this could be organised via colleges the way that commercial companies have member-get-member incentive programmes. It can also be an IA provider who is able to speak the language of the individual and use the profile described earlier to influence outcomes or an outreach programme.

This has worked well in Telford where LEA-funded outreach workers spent time just catching buses and chatting to people to suggest they come along to some community learning or an open day.

#### Enough information

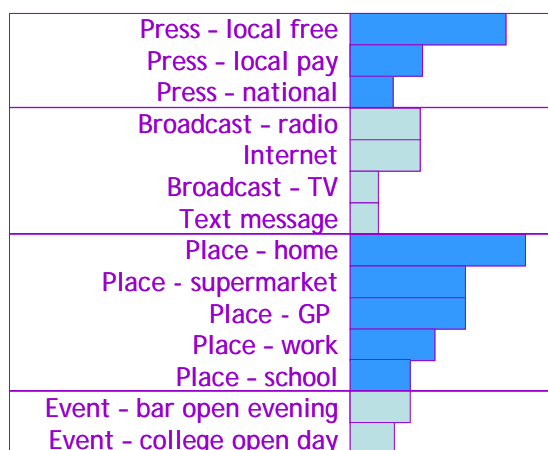
The other option is to provide them with written information - which needs to come to them; they will not seek it out. As the chart shows, the most preferred method of communication is a leaflet coming through the door either on its own or as an insert in the local free paper. It is important to bear in mind however that many of them are in REFLECTIVE mode so may never do anything about learning if this is all that happens.

#### Communication channels

In this chart, the size of the bar represents the level of interest in that method of communication.

The adults we spoke to also made some specific suggestions which are interesting to note:

- Sponsored evening eg pool competition where you have to have a structured conversation to get free beer
- Advert / flyer on the inside of pizza box
- Local person knocking on doors
- Pop ups on the internet (e-bay)
- Possibility to register interest (as in Fish4jobs etc) and be alerted when funding or course availability comes up in your area.



## 5 Employer view

### 5.1 Context

This is influenced firstly by the make up of employers in the area, and then by their attitudes to learning.

We observed the following about Staffordshire:

- Declining traditional industries (potteries, mining)
- High level of manufacturing roles still compared to UK as a whole
- Growth in service industries (care, call centres, distribution)

We talked to employers in the area, though by definition these tend to be employers with more interest in training as they have agreed to be interviewed on the subject of training. Despite this positive attitude to training, we still find that there are opportunities to improve the communication and brokerage of training. Training is not the thing employers are most likely to be thinking of and it takes some prompting for them to realise what training they are involved with.

The processes they use for training are somewhat haphazard and often as a response to a learning provider offering training or legislation requiring it, rather than a strategic choice.

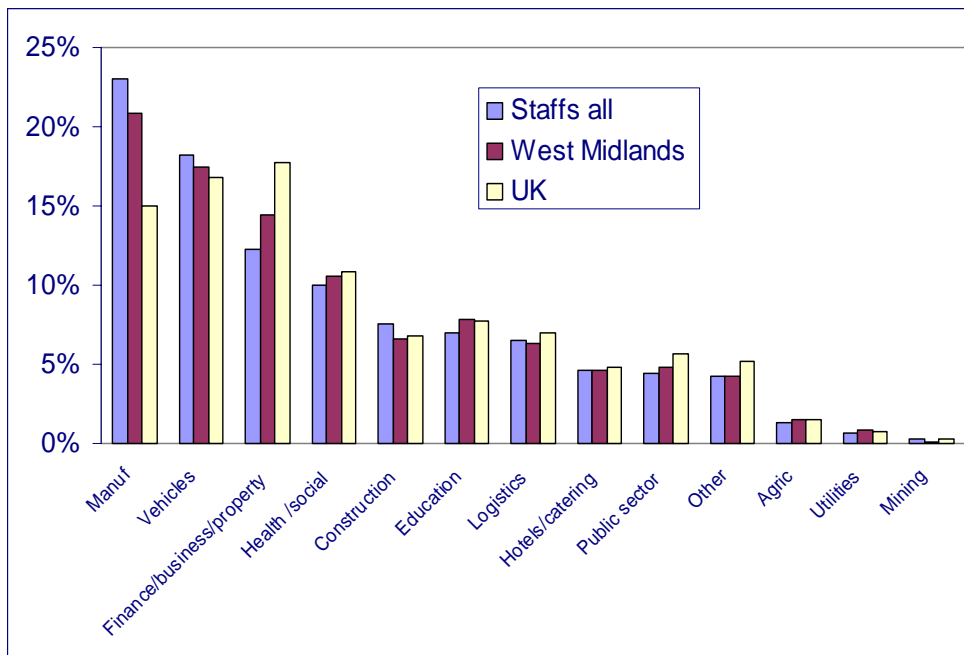
However, given the confidence issues of low-skilled adults, employers are a key route to learning and it is useful to understand what would be the best way to communicate with them in order to increase participation.

*“Increasingly, many professions require young people to take vocational routes through education. It is therefore essential that vocational courses are tailored to the needs of employers, are taught by teachers with relevant experience and are recognised with the high esteem they deserve”*

*David Bell, Chief Inspector of Schools*

A recent survey by the Association of Colleges found that 59% of Britons believe employers do not take responsibility for training their workers. 74% said that employers should be fined for failing to supply sufficient training. This fits with the general lack of empowerment of low skilled adults and the tendency to blame external factors for their situation. It also demonstrates the opportunity to leverage this route by identifying what gets in the way and making it easier for employers.

## 5.2 Employment in Staffordshire



Compared to the rest of the UK, significantly more jobs are in manufacturing (23% of the total compared to 15% across the UK) and fewer in the finance and business sector which is the largest employer across the UK with 18% compared to third largest in Staffordshire with 12%. Many manufacturing jobs are low skilled and may not offer career progression opportunities. There is also an increasing trend to use agencies to supply staff in these roles as that increases flexibility. For the individuals working in this way there is a lower likelihood of training or any investment in their development. They can become trapped.

However, despite suggestions to the contrary from the adults we spoke to, there are opportunities where a qualification is a requirement for a job. A review of local paper job adverts we picked up the following more frequent requests for qualifications:

- ACOPS - Approved Codes of Practice
- Mechanics class 1
- Drivers L2 / HGV / PSV
- Childcare NVQ3
- Health and Safety
- LLB - Bachelor of Law
- Fork lift
- C&G - City & Guilds mechanical engineering
- HND -Honours Degree mechanical engineering
- AMSPAR - the Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists
- Nursing
- Architect

## 5.3 *Employer behaviour and attitude*

### 5.3.1 Their buzzwords

In the course of the research with employers, we also assessed their profile with respect to learning - for themselves and for their staff. It is generally recognised that employers who value training for themselves are more likely to support training for their staff. If, on the other hand, they have built their company from scratch, based on hard work and a lifetime's experience, they may feel that anybody can learn on the job and training courses and qualifications are a waste of time and money.

So we start by looking for their CRITERIA. That means the things they look for in their job, the things they need to get to be satisfied.

These fall into two main areas:

#### Personal needs

- Job satisfaction
- To enjoy what I'm doing
- Making enough money to enjoy a good standard of living
- Helping and guiding my clients to develop their businesses (Professional services)
- Supporting the local community
- Seeing happy customers

#### Business related needs

- Getting things done, doing the job
- Having happy staff
- Seeing settled residents who are getting the care they need (Care)
- Knowing that the staff know how to react to situations

As is often the case, the personal list is longer than the business one - it is often underestimated in business to business marketing that the person making the decision is still a human being. Some studies suggest that up to 80% of the decision is based on emotional factors rather than rational ones. The price has to be right of course, but the choice of supplier may often depend on who they trust, who they enjoy meeting with, who they feel understands their position and so on.

The reason for identifying these CRITERIA is so we know what any marketing communications have to talk about up front in order to get the attention of these people.

It is interesting to note that even those individuals whose sole job is staff training do not mention "increasing skills" as something they want from their job.

Any messages to this audience are more likely to influence if they talk about what matters to the recipient, rather than promoting the key benefits as seen by the messenger.

### 5.3.2 Current training

Employers source training from many suppliers on a fairly ad hoc basis.

The list of providers of learning opportunities identified below includes FE colleges but they do not have an exclusive market position.

You will notice that much of the "other" list is very specific. For many employers, training is about fixing a specific skill gap and is very focused on that eg installing a new type of roofing system or training staff in lifting and handling skills so they don't have an accident.

Few employers that we have talked to - either in Staffordshire or elsewhere - see training in a broader sense of personal development of the individual and the skills bank of the company.

Some of the training currently provided by "other" could be offered by FE colleges or private work- based learning providers. There is certainly an opportunity here. Although there is a preference for in-house training where an employee is trained as a trainer, this is based on convenience and flexibility. It could be argued that these employers would be better off leaving this to the experts and allowing their staff to get on with the more valuable work of running the business. For this sales argument to work, the provision has to be flexible enough to fit business needs.

#### College based

- Sage
- Apprentices - plumbing, care, bricklaying
- NIC electrics
- Accountancy
- Foreign languages
- Food hygiene
- NVQ2 customer service

#### In-house training

- Building regulations
- Manual handling
- Induction
- On the job
- Conservation

#### Other providers

- St John's - first aid,
- NHS - infection control, diabetes, dementia
- Suppliers - builders merchants, manufacturers, roofing systems,
- Blue Flame - corgi, ACOPS
- Fire service - fire awareness
- Police - domestic violence
- Social services - assistive techniques
- SARCA distance learning (Care)

### 5.3.3 Attitude to training

Overall there is a balance between positive and negative comments about training. It is worth noting that the positive comments tend to be about the bigger issues "training is a good thing" while the negatives express their fears of wasting money / effort on the wrong course or wrong employee.

Most of the negatives offer opportunity for the broker service as they can take some of the fear of failure out of the process for the employer. Then when marketing materials and brokers are talking about the positive benefits of training, they can use the same concepts and phrases as the employers for increased resonance and therefore credibility.

Positive approach

- Anything that comes through the door to do with learning, I'd look at it
- It benefits my staff and it benefits the business

Practical

- I'd call the college if I needed anything
- If my staff can't do their job right, someone could die

Negative on practicalities

- We get half a dozen calls a day from would be apprentices. They are pushed into it by their parents. Not as easy as it should be to find out where to go
- Why can't we have a one stop shop?
- It's hard to know who qualifies

Comments on employees

- Older ones resist training
- It's a lot of investment for Apprentices to pack up half way through

### Views of Further Education (FE)

We asked specifically about FE and their views on it. There are some particular concerns about the quality of some courses though this is less than we have seen elsewhere.

They felt that messages they got on FE didn't always tell them what they needed to know. It may be that some of their view of FE is a result of their view of the messages they receive rather than first hand experience of FE training.

Positive comments

- The local college always phone me if they've got funding for something I can use
- If I needed anything I'd call the college and ask about it

Negative comments

- Our local college has a 0% pass rate in accountancy
- I gave up half way through and asked for my money back
- It started ok then they got a new lecturer and she didn't know anything
- College? Yes, we work with them - we're building their toilet block

### 5.3.4 Organising training

We have seen in previous studies that most large employers feel that they have a structured approach to training. In smaller companies, and all of those we spoke to in Staffordshire, it seems to be driven more by need (legislative or for insurance purposes or because clients demand it)

Companies who employ more highly qualified staff are more likely to support HE among their staff and more likely to consider the development of the individual.

However the process for arranging the training was pretty ad hoc in all cases. In some cases they are not planning to train until the college phones them and offers a place on a relevant course that is coming up.

Alternatively, they might use an outside supplier they already know, or flip through material or search on the web. Nobody had a central advice point they referred to, and nobody mentioned calling their local college as the first step. There looks to be a clear opportunity to provide that service.

*"One of the managers checks the rules and makes sure we're covered"  
"I look through all the flyers I get and keep in the drawer here"*

## 5.4 Language and Behaviour Profile of employers (LaB)




In order to produce well targeted materials for employers, it is necessary to understand their profile with respect to learning. We use a similar approach to that of adults described earlier, but with some additional dimensions that are important for this audience.

We have assessed their LaB profile and can compare

- the Staffordshire employers we interviewed
- other employer interviews we have done (for Apprenticeships and Action for Business LSC initiatives)
- current employer materials (Staffordshire and elsewhere)

We then make suggestions about the implications of this and ways of communicating to this group that could be more likely to influence them

In all of these charts, the following key is used:

Staffordshire employers   
Other UK employers   
Current messages 

### 5.4.1 Away from / towards



The fact that employers are AWAY FROM about training means that they think about staff training in terms of solving problems rather than achieving goals.

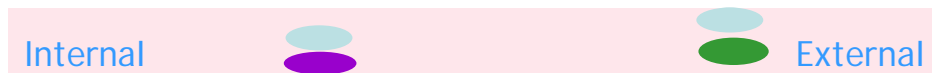
#### Examples of phrases that can work

"Don't lose your best staff"

"Don't get caught out by new regulations"

"Solve your training problems"

#### 5.4.2 Internal / external



Most employers are INTERNAL about organising staff training. That means they will be sceptical of any outside views, and particularly do not want to be told what to do. The broker will be more successful if they use the language of suggestion, not advice.

For example

*"You might want to consider..."*

will work better with someone who is internal than

*"what you should do is..."*

However service companies in particular are used to being very external about measuring their business success (customer feedback, sales etc). And smaller companies in particular can value the reassurance that larger organisations are using this kind of training - or any training at all - so it is the **right** thing to do. Case studies are very encouraging for this group.

#### Examples of phrases that can work

Internal

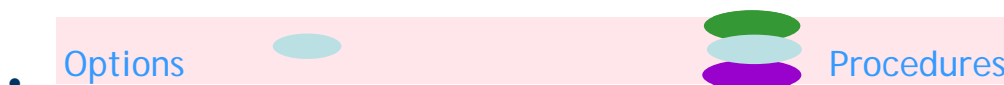
*"Running a business is tough enough without..."*

*"You know what your staff need - we could help find it for you"*

External

*"Look what other businesses in your area are doing"*

#### 5.4.3 Options / Procedures



Most employers are **procedures** about learning. They want to know that there is a process that leads to a result. They want to know that staff are going through "the right training" and that there is a process to follow.

Some of the materials we presented have a more **options** message. Focusing on procedures is likely to make the materials seem more relevant and useful to employers.

## Examples of phrases that can work

### Procedures

*"The first step is to talk to X who can help you identify your training needs."*

*"We have all the information required to help you reach the right decision"*

### 5.4.4 Sameness / Difference



Staffordshire employers are consistent with those elsewhere in the country in seeking "Sameness with exception". For this group, improvement is important. They do not want their staff to develop completely new and different skills - it is more efficient to build on what they already know.

Current materials tend to focus on newness and something different. A more effective approach is to concentrate on improvement of what already exists.

#### Phrases that can influence this group

*"Build on the skills your staff already have"*

Any phrase incorporating a sense of progression or talking about more or better

### 5.4.5 Proactive / Reflective



Larger employers are PROACTIVE about getting their training needs sorted out. Their "Just do it" approach may mean they don't always identify the best solution, but they will certainly get it sorted quickly.

The Staffordshire employers that we spoke to preferred to reflect on the options. This may be partly a function of the lesser time pressure outside of South East England - or it can mean that the employers are not yet convinced enough about the benefits of training to take action. A broker could usefully steer them towards proactive by making the best plan clear (procedures), showing how it builds on existing skills to improve the business (sameness with exception) and making it easier for them to take action. They may then be encouraged to become more proactive about training, and therefore more likely to take it up.

## Examples of phrases that can work

### Reflective

*"You may have been thinking about how to..."*

*"We'll get on with investigating that straight away then you can review the information and decide what to do next"*

#### 5.4.6 Specific / general



This dimension is important in business because of the acute time pressure that many employers feel they are under. They are used to processing large amounts of information in the shortest possible timeframe. They are not interested in excessive detail - their ideal piece of communication would be a single sheet of paper with bullet points of the key points and clearly identified next steps.

##### Phrases that can influence this group

*"Here's the overview"*

*"Call xxx now to arrange an assessment visit from one of our advisers"*

Not too much detail, straight to the point

### 5.5 Communicating with employers

As well as getting the right messages into any communications with employers, they are clear about the best way for them to be communicated with.

*"I like this one. It looks like it means business"*

*"This looks too serious. It would make me worried"*

They are a bit surprised by the range and diversity of materials, and some express concerns about the efficiency of such a process.

*"They're all coming from different organisations. It would be difficult to know where to start"*

Particularly since they are reflective, this wide range of choice can be counterproductive.

We used the discussions with employers to design the process they would feel most comfortable with.

In the first instance they want to receive a business like leaflet through the post along with a personalised covering letter. They are all quite careful to look at and file any information on training.

*"Anything that is to do with learning I would look at"*

*"I like glossy. It looks professional"*

The leaflet needs to be short and to the point.

*"I wouldn't read materials when they come in big packs"*

*"This is good. Punchy. To the point"*

As they are **procedures** about learning, they need a clear message on the front explaining what the leaflet is for, then bullet points inside summarising the benefits for the business and benefits for the employee. At the bottom they want to see what to do next.

*"I want to see the key information on the front"*

*"I like this because it's bullet points"*

They are **general** about learning information and want a quick overview. They are not prepared to read long documents, especially if they are not about their business and their needs. Any case studies are of interest if they are about relevant businesses - for example, a small elderly care home wants to read about a similar size and type of business, not a major logistics company.

*"I would read it if it was short"*

Any reference to government support is useful if it explains why a service is free to employers, but we have seen in Staffordshire and elsewhere that materials for employers should look businesslike not

*"I don't like that one, it looks too public sector".*

After the leaflet and personalised letter they need a follow up phone call. They admit that even if they intend to go ahead with training, there are many other pressures on their time and it may drift to the bottom of the pile.

The phone call should be brisk and clear, explaining what is on offer and ideally (from the employer point of view) arranging a visit from a training professional with a business background who can identify training needs, then go away and research the options and send a recommendation through. This recommendation should include where the course is held, times of classes, length of course, resulting qualification, cost and any available funding.

Independently of this process, employers would like to be able to access a one stop shop that can answer queries and source training for them via a single phone number. They would like the option of sending queries by email and getting advice back in the same way.

## 6 Local issues

### 6.1 Cannock

#### 6.1.1 Who lives here

	UK	Cannock
Male	29m	46k
Female	30m	47k
Total population	59m	93k
Population density (/km2)	244	1200
<b>Age profile (%)</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	6.1
Adult	14.1	14.9
Working	61.7	62.6
Retired	18.4	16.4

#### Local issues

- 36% of population in production and construction industries, 30% in manual labour
- 31% of 16-17 year olds stay on at school
- Low levels of educational achievement and low participation of white males in learning
- 9% not working, looking after home/family (highest in Staffordshire)

#### Key challenge

- Create a demand for learning and raise achievement

#### Media

- Cannock and Rugeley Chronicle, Cannock Express and Star, Sky TV

#### 6.1.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	22%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Industrial Grit	20%	Hard work, hard life	Drinking, DIY, videos, football	Large terraces and semis	Factory supervisors, operatives
Rustbelt resilience	18%	Self reliant, traditional, basic	DIY, satellite TV, drinking, takeaways	Former council estates built in 30s on outskirts of town	Basic, low skilled, plant operators

#### 6.1.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Open University, Staffordshire University

FE: Cannock Chase Technical College

**Community Learning:** Cannock Chase Council, Staffordshire Web Education and Lifelong Learning, learndirect at Cannock Centre, the Progress Centre and Staffordshire County Council Adult and Community Learning.

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## 6.2 East Staffordshire

### 6.2.1 Who lives here

	UK	East Staffordshire
Male	29m	51k
Female	30m	54k
Total population	59m	105k
Population density (/km2)	244	271
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	6.1
Adult	14.1	15.2
Working	61.7	60.4
Retired	18.4	18.4

#### Local issues

- Predominantly rural with small towns plus Burton upon Trent and Uttoxeter
- Low accessibility to learning and cost effectiveness to providers
- Highest percentage of non-white (6.1%)
- 42% of jobs in manufacturing and vehicle repair

#### Key challenge

- Accessibility to learning and cost effective provision in rural context

#### Media

- Sky TV, Burton Mail, The Advertiser

### 6.2.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Coronation Street	23%	Struggling, simple pleasures	Pub, computer games, young families	Flat fronted Victorian terraces	Driving, construction, manual labour
Industrial Grit	19%	Hard work, hard life	Drinking, DIY, videos, football	Large terraces and semis	Factory supervisors, operatives
Affluent blue collar	10%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled

### 6.2.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Open University

FE: Burton College

**Community Learning:** Apprenticeships, learndirect at Burton Learning Resource Centre, New Horizons and Business Support Enterprise

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## 6.3 Lichfield

### 6.3.1 Who lives here

	UK	Lichfield
Male	29m	46k
Female	30m	48k
Total population	59m	94k
Population density (/km2)	244	284
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	5.2
Adult	14.1	14.1
Working	61.7	61.6
Retired	18.4	19.1

#### Local issues

- More affluent, have higher levels of participation and achievement
- Pockets of deprivation
- More jobs than average (9%) in education

#### Key challenge

- Need right mix of provision and offer of comprehensive provision without duplication

#### Media

- Sky TV, Lichfield Mercury, Lichfield Post

### 6.3.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	23%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Older right to buy	13%	Insular, traditional	Home, holidays, grandchildren, bingo	Ex council housing, owner occupied terraces	Manufacturing, processing
New town materialists	13%	Keen consumers	Pub, pop music, young families.	Recently constructed social and private housing, out of town estates	Light industry, unemployment

### 6.3.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Staffordshire University Lichfield Centre -

FE: Tamworth and Lichfield College

Community Learning: Lichfield District Council Community Training Centres, Venture House, learndirect at assa and The Lichfield Centre

## 6.4 Newcastle-under-Lyme

### 6.4.1 Who lives here

	UK	Newcastle
Male	29m	59k
Female	30m	63k
Total population	59m	122k
Population density (/km2)	244	578
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	5
Adult	14.1	13.3
Working	61.7	61.9
Retired	18.4	19.7

#### Local issues

- Traditionally characterised by low participation and achievement, low aspirations, low wage, low mobility
- High levels of deprivation, affected by the downturn in manufacturing
- Poor in basic skills
- Biggest industries: manufacturing, vehicle repair, health and social work

#### Key challenge

- Raise aspirations
- Build on EMA success to extend to adults

#### Media

- Sky TV, The Advertiser, Sentinel

### 6.4.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Industrial Grit	17%	Hard work, hard life	Drinking, DIY, videos, football	Large terraces and semis	Factory supervisors, operatives
Affluent blue collar	16%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Rustbelt resilience	16%	Self reliant, traditional, basic	DIY, satellite TV, drinking, takeaways	Former council estates built in 30s on outskirts of town	Basic, low skilled, plant operators

### 6.4.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Open University

FE: Newcastle-under-Lyme College, Chesterton Community College

Community Learning: Newcastle-under-Lyme College - Adult and Community Learning Programme, Newcastle-under-Lyme IT Learning Centre, Dyslexia Centre

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## 6.5 South Staffordshire

### 6.5.1 Who lives here

	UK	South Staffordshire
Male	29m	52k
Female	30m	54k
Total population	59m	106k
Population density (/km2)	244	260
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	4.9
Adult	14.1	14.1
Working	61.7	61.6
Retired	18.4	19.4

#### Local issues

- Generally more affluent and rural, higher levels of participation and achievement
- Pockets of deprivation

#### Key challenge

- Develop right mix of provision and comprehensive range of opportunities without duplication

#### Media

- Sky TV, Burton Mail

### 6.5.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	29%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Older right to buy	15%	Insular, traditional	Home, holidays, grandchildren, bingo	Ex council housing, owner occupied terraces	Manufacturing, processing
Rustbelt resilience	13%	Self reliant, traditional, basic	DIY, satellite TV, drinking, takeaways	Former council estates built in 30s on outskirts of town	Basic, low skilled, plant operators

### 6.5.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Open University

FE: Pendrell College

Community Learning: Pendrell College, learndirect at Wombourne/ Codsall Community High School

## 6.6 Stafford

### 6.6.1 Who lives here

	UK	Stafford
Male	29m	58k
Female	30m	60k
Total population	59m	118k
Population density (/km2)	244	197
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	5
Adult	14.1	13.2
Working	61.7	61.8
Retired	18.4	20

#### Local issues

- More affluent, have higher levels of participation and achievement
- High number of public sector jobs (9%)
- Pockets of deprivation

#### Key challenge

- Develop right mix of provision and offer of comprehensive provision without duplication

#### Media

- Sky TV, Stafford Post, Stafford and Stone Chronicle

### 6.6.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	13%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Coronation Street	12%	Struggling, simple pleasures	Pub, computer games, young families	Flat fronted Victorian terraces near town centre	Driving, construction, manual labour
Older right to buy	11%	Insular, traditional	Home, holidays, grandchildren, bingo	Ex council housing, owner occupied terraces	Manufacturing, processing

### 6.6.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Staffordshire University

FE: Stafford College, Rodbaston College

Community Learning: Stafford College, learndirect

## 6.7 Staffordshire Moorlands

### 6.7.1 Who lives here

	UK	Staffordshire Moorlands
Male	29m	47k
Female	30m	48k
Total population	59m	95k
Population density (/km2)	244	165
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	4.9
Adult	14.1	13.2
Working	61.7	61.2
Retired	18.4	20.7

#### Local issues

- Predominantly rural
- 24% of population in manufacturing industries, 10% in construction (above average)

#### Key challenge

- Improve accessibility to learning and cost effectiveness to providers in rural environment with very low population density

#### Media

- Sky TV, Leek Post and Times

### 6.7.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	27%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Industrial Grit	22%	Hard work, hard life	Drinking, DIY, videos, football	Large terraces and semis	Factory supervisors, operatives
Coronation Street	17%	Struggling, simple pleasures	Pub, computer games, young families	Flat fronted Victorian terraces near town centre	Driving, construction, manual labour

### 6.7.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Staffordshire University, SURF - Staffordshire Univ Regional Fed

FE: Moorlands Sixth Form Centre, Leek College

Community Learning: BBC learning zone, Staffordshire Web, learndirect, IT Skills Learning Centre

## 6.8 Stoke-on-Trent

### 6.8.1 Who lives here

	UK	Stoke
Male	29m	116k
Female	30m	122k
Total population	59m	238k
Population density (/km2)	244	2559
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	5.6
Adult	14.1	14
Working	61.7	61.6
Retired	18.4	18.8

#### Local issues

- Lack of skilled labour - 43% of population (19-74) with no qualifications
- 28% of jobs in manufacturing, decline in pottery industry
- Demand for skills in construction, care and professional services
- 10% permanently sick or disabled and 9% at home in caring role
- High % ethnic minorities (5.2%) concentrated into certain areas of town
- Homogeneity, lack of role models and family pressure to conform

#### Key challenges

- Raise low participation levels

#### Media

- The Advertiser, The Sentinel, Sky TV

### 6.8.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Coronation Street	26%	Struggling, simple pleasures	Pub, computer games, young families	Flat fronted Victorian terraces near town centre	Driving, construction, manual labour
Ex-industrial legacy	14%	Poor, older, "working class"	Football, TV	Long established council estates around cities	Semi skilled and routine factory jobs
Affluent blue collar	12%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled

### 6.8.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Keele University, Staffordshire University

FE: Stoke-on-Trent College, Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form

Community Learning: Community Centre, College in the Community, Central Education and Training, Healthcare learning centre

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## 6.9 Tamworth

### 6.9.1 Who lives here

	UK	Tamworth
Male	29m	37
Female	30m	38
Total population	59m	75
Population density (/km2)	244	2419
<b>Age profile %</b>		
Pre-school	5.8	6.4
Adult	14.1	15.8
Working	61.7	64.1
Retired	18.4	13.7

#### Local issues

- Low levels of educational achievement
- 60% of population in full time employment - highest in Staffordshire and above UK average
- Work in manufacturing, vehicle repair and logistics

#### Key challenge

- Create demand for learning, raise achievement and stimulate inward investment

#### Media

- Sky TV, Tamworth Times, Tamworth Herald

### 6.9.2 Who lives here (key lifestyle groups)

Lifestyle Group	% of working population	Key words	Interests	Housing	Typical jobs
Affluent blue collar	28%	Steady, traditional	TV, pubs, home, DIY, camping.	Spacious 40s semis	Unionised manufacturing, semi skilled
Industrial Grit	16%	Hard work, hard life	Drinking, DIY, videos, football	Large terraces and semis	Factory supervisors, operatives
New town materialists	16%	Keen consumers	Pub, pop music, young families.	Recently constructed social and private housing, out of town estates	Light industry, unemployment

### 6.9.3 Learning opportunities

HE: Open University

FE: Tamworth and Lichfield College

Community Learning: Tamworth (North) Youth Community and Education Centre, learndirect, Sunrise Computer Training

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## 7 Feedback from Event

This section contains the feedback from delegates attending the Stimulating Demand for Adults Conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004, who were divided into 9 workshops. Numbers in brackets reflect the frequency that comments were made when that was more than once.

### 7.1 *Learner attitudes*

#### 7.1.1 Barriers to learning

##### Time and timing

- Age - too late, too old (3)
- Flexibility to fit in with individual's lifestyle
- Time / tiredness
- Cost in time

##### Low aspirations

- Attitude passed from one generation to another
- High levels of people with basic skills needs (so it becomes normal)
- Learners own mindset / social skills
- Motivation can be lacking
- Peer pressure (don't break ranks)

##### Money

- Benefits trap
- Cost (3)
- Funding restricts development of non accredited learning which could attract people into learning in the first place eg taster days etc
- Loss of benefits

##### Bad experiences

- Causes declining spiral of expectations - need to address lifestyle issues first. Look to support of mentors
- Frightened by classroom environment and memories of school
- The word "learning" is off-putting

##### Family

- Childcare
- Family structure - role models
- Time spent with families - raising families etc

##### No guarantees

- Concern over learning leading onto a well paid job
- Learning must result in a benefit

## Fear

- Fear of failure (2)
- Fear of past experiences - school - fear of unknown
- Fear of the unknown
- First time daunting in class

## Self confidence

- Confidence and self esteem.
- Recognition of own capability
- Need hand holding
- Unknown jargon is off-putting
- Offenders' lifestyle - money, drugs, etc

## Transport

- Getting there
- Transport issues in rural areas
- No wish to travel outside the community

## Lack of direction

- Identifying own skills
- Individual styles of learning - not all suited to classroom
- Lack awareness of possibilities - expectations.
- Don't know where to go. -
- Don't know which door to knock on.

## Employers

- Lack of commitment to training by employers
- Shift patterns

## Course availability

- Limited provision
- Timing of courses
- The "16 hour rule" + Jobcentre restrictions eg 6 months unemployment before any help offered

## Cultural issues

- Re BME - language / cultural issues - hinders access to provision. Look to provision within communities / community venues.

## 7.1.2 How can we change negative perceptions?

### Right venues / scale

- Need appropriate venues and learning environments. Non threatening (not classroom), small groups, user friendly accessible, local community neighbourhood venues (7)
- Take the learning to the people eg e-bus
- College in Community

### **Right communications**

- Word of mouth
- Go to play groups and church groups
- Image change of vocational learning for schools/colleges.
- Some publicity like College Live newspaper
- More publicity about help with funding and childcare
- Change the image of learning in the classroom
- Start Slowly - certificate for small steps of achievement

### **Right courses**

- Tailor-make courses
- Courses must be relevant and meet their needs
- Emphasis on vocational work not just academic

### **Mentoring / community**

- Develop an action plan with an individual
- Establish links with the community
- Use role models from communities

### **Employers on board**

- Teach employers about benefits of having a skill base
- T.U.C.
- Learner Rep book

### **Cooperation**

- Tackle low aspirations with a multi agency approach to support all needs

## **7.1.3 The perceived benefits of learning**

Based on the workshop, these are the key benefits, as seen by adults, which can be used to "sell" learning (the buzzwords)

### **Better job / money**

- Improve yourself to get another / better job
- Increased income
- Higher wages through more qualifications
- Cash back (adult learning grant) (2)

### **Self confidence**

- Talk about increased Self Esteem
- Self esteem / personal confidence

### **Step by step / support**

- Recognise learner's existing skills/experiences
- Tasters
- Student helpers at the beginning of learners
- Community learning - make it available with support and help with costs

### Benefits that are relevant to learners

- Free crèche
- Social aspect - meet new people
- Learn so you can increase your purchasing power eg purchasing football tickets
- Greater flexibility in methods / approaches to learning

### Learner driven

- Understand what the learner expectations are and what they need to do to get there
- Need to build relationships with individuals
- Recognise the barriers and provide the key information to overcome them
- Promote vocational training

## 7.2 *Targets and messages*

### 7.2.1 Key target groups

These are the key groups to focus on to maximise impact of IA and how to communicate with them

#### Men

Group	Definition	Messages
Redundant workers (male, 35-40)	Get to them early, before they leave their current job. Adapt approach depending on if they are in stop/wait/go groups. Much better to complete course before they leave (better completion rates). But need to tackle company resistance. Work with companies facing redundancy. Change in life for men - mid life crisis. Before they get in the benefits trap - especially men. Or redundant less than 6 months (before they get desperate with lower aspirations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't get left behind by your kids</li> <li>• Recognise what you can do -</li> <li>• This a chance to do what you want to do</li> <li>• Release your potential</li> <li>• Don't get trapped</li> </ul> <p>Don't bin your skills recycle them Focus on areas / time when most likely to consider learning eg men need a crisis point. Courses need to be linked to school hours and holidays. You can learn without qualifications - need to enjoy without thinking about exams! Promote Lifelong learning. Learning gets you places Realistic role models. Workplace learning. 'Building' activity - don't raise false expectations but build aspirations (could possibly facilitate via key initiatives - work based training).</p>

## Men (cont'd)

Group	Definition	Messages
Redundant workers (male, 35-40) (cont'd)		Multi-skilling increases possibilities of avoiding redundancy - notion of transferable skills. Make it an opportunity - build confidence that will get another job, perhaps a different sector.
Males in mid 20s	Pubs / clubs - need to get it right. Via work . Need to overcome reluctance to train in their own time. Need career guidance to tackle belief that pay in some occupations not high enough. Reality hit - have experienced the 'fast life' now understand the reality and the connection between learning and higher salaries. Realisation of the need to do something to get on. Need help to find direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't get stuck in a rut</li> <li>• Don't get left behind</li> <li>• Increase your real choices</li> <li>• The choice is yours</li> <li>• Increase your choices, give it a go</li> </ul> Focus on social benefits. Improve your prospects. Promotion videos. Link learning to wage packet.
Males 12 - 14	Better environment in schools - practical for young people - changing attitude like college-after primary school.	College is like school in some ways - but you get treated as an adult.

## Women

Since females are more receptive, and they influence family, should continue to target

Group	Definition	Messages
Older female returners	30-40 women with children back at school. No stigma to return to learning. Receptive to learning. Build their confidence. Include the children (family learning) to create new learners for the future. Change their mindset. Longer term breaking the low aspiration barrier. Identify key points for parents and encouraging them to progress with kids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the real you</li> <li>• Don't let a lack of confidence stop you</li> <li>• Be what you want to be</li> <li>• It's your time now</li> <li>• Skills for Living</li> </ul> Free courses - Qualifications Funding help, help for family, help with kids' homework. Emphasis on related cash benefits or food, bus passes. Link to school hours and holidays You can learn without qualifications - need to enjoy without thinking about exams!

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## Women (cont'd)

Group	Definition	Messages
Older female returners (cont'd)		Promote Lifelong learning. Learning gets you places. Realistic role models.
Young Mums (parents)	When children have started school Able to engage in activities during the day (not in full time work). Phone contact to be friendly, helpful, interested in them, not just selling to them. Build trust and credibility, consistency. When meeting with person, make sure that it's the same person they spoke to. Relevant info to themselves and their particular situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the real you</li> <li>• Don't lose your identity</li> <li>• Meet people like you</li> <li>• Learn something you like</li> </ul> Families - around numeracy and literacy: IT Group Approach. Target the parents via the children. Family approach may stimulate interest and encourage further learning. Flexible. Childcare / funding etc. Collaboration of multi agencies working together. Help those who help themselves.

## Men and women

Group	Definition	Messages
40+	Pensions crisis may encourage people to look at employment beyond 60+. Retrain to improve salary and boost final pension payouts. Extend their sense of achievement / role in society. Create good role models in family and community. Personal development as important as accredited learning. Toolkit kind of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the skills you already have</li> <li>• Don't waste your skills</li> <li>• Your experience counts</li> </ul> Train in order to train others → become training mentors within the company Families → help your children Focus on the individual. Use present skills to develop further skills. Increase prospects of employability Recognise and celebrate past achievement and build around this. Learning tailored to your needs.
Workers	Build around developing / anticipated industrial and commercial developments. Look at links between employment and individual. Encourage employers to multi - skill workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update your skills</li> <li>• L-EARN more</li> </ul> Use ILM - Intermediate Labour Market ( links people to employment opportunities - mainly low status) Promote and develop learning mentors in Unions/workplace. Financial security. Contribution to family life.

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## 7.2.2 The right channel

Adjusting communications to match the audience's needs makes sense. Based on the workshop feedback, the following are the key ways to get the message across:

### For Individuals

- Share literature, ideas and good practice amongst colleges to maximise the promotional effort
- Use website for information eg download prospectus
- Avoid jargon. Information must be relevant to them
- Recognise that you are dealing with range of very different groups / communities
- More pictorially based / CD based, especially for younger target groups.
- Recognise different levels of ability.
- Target individual homes (Mosaic types)
- Simple messages - to the point
- Use known, relevant brands eg Sure Start, NHS, learndirect

### Embedded IAG / one to one

Embedding IAG into other services / first point of contact

Face to face with community workers - joint working in nurseries etc

- In the right place eg in playgrounds for women returners
- More one to one personal interaction
- Community development workers
- Word of mouth

### Transport

- Public Transport
- "Back of bus"
- Posters - more pictures than writing - and small (eg business card sized) take away
- IAG - signposting - working with groups. Use of job buses and, possibly, the E-buses

### Multiple contact

- Offer tasters to explain and encourage
- Include email address - give all methods - phone, etc
- Better use of local media
- Free Papers

### Leaflets

- Need to be very targeted / localised eg on an estate
- Appropriate 'minority language' for BME
- Use local people, real case stories (for women)

### Places

- One stop shop
- Use Supermarkets

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- Use Fast food outlets where individuals are relaxed with environment eg “Feed your minds” (in McDonald’s)
- GP surgeries

#### Events

- Try pub / club (but has to be right venue, right night and right offer)
- Company social clubs quiz
- Run ‘focus groups’ - support them via outreach workers / workshops etc.

### 7.2.3 For Employers

#### One stop shop

- Promote the ‘ones that work’ - use case studies and success stories
- What is in it for them
- Talk about benefits to employers - “what’s in it for me” Use models in peer groups etc
- Use LSC in advocacy role with employers
- ‘Works in this factory - works for you’

#### Use colleges better

- Have business development unit in college offering clear, relevant advice to employers - key contact in area for advice
- Improve communications between colleges etc. Joined up thinking
- Promote learning amongst employees within college sector

#### Direct mail

- Personalised letter / leaflet with follow up phone call
- Clean simple message around benefits that matter to them (eg more profit, higher productivity, lower staff turnover, less absence, less stress-related illness, grow-your-own staff, improve your company’s reputation)

#### Targeting

- Speak to pre redundancy groups, then leaflet
- Identify employers for when it is appropriate
- Aimed at ‘the right person’ in the company

#### Face to face

- Important
- Relate it direct to their business
- Sell the benefits to them
- Aim for 1:1 communication

#### Piggy back on other initiatives / networks

- IIP can be a good way in
- Partnership with existing small business networks
- Learner Reps
- Mentors / champions within the organisations
- Health and Safety coupled with IAG

## 7.3 *How we make this work*

### Network

- IAG network should distribute messages to the wider network
- Each organisation needs to know more about what others do so we can develop synergy
- Bring back the network meetings
- Individual projects are often target driven, and tend to be 'territorial' (protecting targets)! Aligned targets would help
- Coordinate activities to avoid duplication and gaps
- Networking between organisations and employers following good examples.

### Marketing

- Coordinate communications to avoid duplication
- We need to share good marketing practice. Marketing managers from Colleges need to liaise more closely. Join strategies to target key groups. Involve the community sector
- Marketing has to be good
- New literature needs to reflect today

### Partnerships

- Partnership working with the 'right people' (3)
- Continuity of advisers
- WBL Providers cannot invite learners in - they need partnerships to make it work
- Be consistent with individuals.

### A learning network

- Improve the sharing of good practice
- Any development towards coordination needs to be centrally driven by the LSC
- Are community leaders always 'in tune' with their communities? Ask critical questions - self assessment issues
- Different agendas, different targets, different funding needs to be linked

### Services

- Develop one stop shop

### Opportunities

- Beth Johnson have 4,500 properties. Target group there. Area implementation teams made up of all key stakeholders linked to Community Forums. Tenants' newsletter. They can contribute to childcare costs.
- More topical types of meeting.
- Update the directories.