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Improving services for learners with mental health difficulties

News

Issue 12

Reporting on Events

The Partnership Programme continues to forge ahead in order to fulfil its mission to improve access to, and success in, learning and skills for people who experience mental health difficulties. We will continue to promote the importance of participation in learning and skills for people with mental health difficulties and seek to ensure that it is linked to key government agendas of employment and well-being. Alongside this we will also continue to provide information and facilitate the sharing of good practice.

In addition to that we have a big programme of activity which some of you will be involved in. As well as all the national projects we also have activity going on each region. For details please contact your Regional Project Manager, their details are listed on page 4.

At the end of the year (March 2010) there should also be reports and briefing sheets that we hope everybody will be able to benefit from.

Best wishes  
Kathryn James  
**Programme Director, National  
Lead – Partnership Programme**

**"The A to Z of Life and Learning:  
reducing distress and promoting  
self empowerment through learning"**

This Niace/CoolTan Arts Regional Learning Event took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> of October at CoolTan Arts.

We initially had last minute nerves about everybody turning up. After a few scary moments, things starting falling into place. We kicked off with introductions and a brief outline of what NIACE offers in terms of courses and support. CoolTan presented a fashion show and a poetry recital of various items produced within its workshops. The two presentations seemed to go down really well.



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In partnership with:



Inclusion Institute

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## Reporting on Events

The afternoon session in contrast focused on social care and was offering more information based workshops such as issues around direct payments. I think everything went very well and I would just like to thank everyone for their participation.

Steven Hampson, volunteer at CoolTan Arts. More information about CoolTan Arts is available on [www.cooltanarts.org.uk](http://www.cooltanarts.org.uk)

### 'Come Dine with Me' says North West LSC

In the spirit of Mindful Employer and World Mental Health Day the North West LSC Learning & Quality Team held a lunchtime 'feel-good food' gathering.

Jim Rogers, Provider Development Adviser, had the idea for the event when a colleague complimented him on his culinary skills.

'I decided that cooking a lunchtime meal for the team might be a nice way for us all to get away from our desks and spend time with each other', says Jim who also collected donations for the PCS Union Charity Fund on the day.

Jim's homemade meatballs in tomato sauce with home grown vegetables and rice were an ideal comfort for an October day in Manchester, and were enjoyed by all of the team.

Kewal Dass, Learning & Quality Director said, 'It is amazing how a simple thing like sitting around a table and eating a meal together can have such a direct positive impact.'

There are now plans for other team members to take turns to cook and I have volunteered to take the next turn and 'treat' everyone with a lasagne.

Clare Worrall

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## Increasing the take-up of work-based learning for people with mental health difficulties.

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**"In 2009 – 2010 the LSC will improve the take-up of work based learning opportunities by people with mental health difficulties."**

Nine Action Research sites, one from each region of the country, are addressing the above Headline Action 7 of the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) Mental Health Strategy. These sites are drawn from Mental Health Services, Local Authorities, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Further Education. Each site has developed an Action Plan which attempts to improve services to learners or potential learners with aims like:

- improved assessment of learners,
- increased support for learners,
- increased opportunities for training.

There are LSC figures showing the poor uptake of opportunities for learners with mental health difficulties accessing Train to Gain and Apprenticeships. A survey will be sent to Work Based Learning Providers which should establish what barriers presently exist for potential learners.

The National Oversight Group with members drawn from Business in the Community, Unionlearn, Asset Skills, the LSC and a learner will also be able to contribute to the development of the project using a VLN (Virtual Learning Network or Moodle). We hope to recruit more Moodle contributors so that Providers can learn from each other.

**Jenny Gartland**

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

## Promoting the recruitment of staff with mental health difficulties

The Equality and Diversity team of the Learning and Skills Council in the North East region has asked NIACE to undertake a project that will develop a resource for post-16 providers to promote the recruitment of staff with mental health difficulties.

It will help the LSC to encourage its partner agencies to create mental health-friendly working environments and, ultimately, increase the number of staff with mental health difficulties recruited to work in the FE/post 16 sector in the North East. It will also support the NIACE/LSC Partnership Programme's contribution to the Mental Health Regional Employment Team by working with other regional initiatives, such as Mindful Employer and Working Well, to promote the mental well-being of staff.

In addition to desk research the project team are identifying effective practices that exist in the region about the recruitment of staff with mental health difficulties in the FE sector.

For more information or to help with this project please contact **Ann Creed**.

### Network of the Managers for Working Well

Supporting the positive mental health of staff in post 16 education and training - a networking event for Human Resources leads.

We are holding a half day events to raise awareness of positive staff mental health and to identify the support needs of HR leads and other key contacts.

The events are all in city centre locations, timed at 10.15am-1pm, including lunch. The dates are:

London December 1<sup>st</sup>  
Leeds December 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Birmingham December 7<sup>th</sup>

Email **Jan Novitsky** for further details  
[jan.novitsky@niace.org.uk](mailto:jan.novitsky@niace.org.uk).

## Stimulating Demand for Community Learners with Mental Health Issues

Weston College and the North Somerset Education and Training Consortium have built a successful partnership with the project work for some years, specifically around the provision of community learning opportunities for people with mental health issues. This can range from severe difficulties to mild stress, which the majority of us will experience at some point in our lives, so we were positive about committing ourselves to a NIACE project aimed at Stimulating Demand for Learning among this group.

The first objective is particularly significant in view of a highly successful, funded project aimed at bridging the gap between GPs (General Practitioners), and learning outcomes which promote mental wellbeing. GPs can, and do, 'prescribe' learning and activity. Consolidating this programme will allow more people to enjoy the benefits of this opportunity.

**Elaine Cleland, Weston College and Paul Davis, North Somerset Education and Training Consortium**

To find further details about this [see...](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Demand-for-Learners.pdf)  
[www.niace.org.uk/documents/Demand-for-Learners.pdf](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Demand-for-Learners.pdf)

**Lin Westmoreland**

**ALW Awards 2010 – please send in your nominations for Adult Learners' Awards [now](#).**

[www.niace.org.uk/alw/nominations/default.htm](http://www.niace.org.uk/alw/nominations/default.htm)



### The Really Useful Book of Learning and Earning

Caroline Law and Suzi Challenger

Designed specifically to support people experiencing mental health difficulties who wish to return to work, volunteering or learning.

This was created in 2007, and has been updated for 2010. To order your copy go to [www.niace.org.uk/publications](http://www.niace.org.uk/publications)

## Mental Health Matters for Teachers Toolkit

This resource, which is supported and funded by West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council, is being produced as one of the national projects of the NIACE/ LSC/ Inclusion Institute Partnership Programme. It aims specifically to support the professionalization of the FE sector workforce as outlined in Priority 3, themes 7 and 8 of Lifelong Learning UK's Workforce Strategy:

**Theme 7:** Professionalising the workforce from initial teacher training to continuing professional development.

**Theme 8:** Being responsive by ensuring new workforce skills demands are met.

### Who is it for?

This resource is primarily aimed at Teacher Trainers and Educators delivering Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes and for those offering Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and staff development opportunities for all teaching staff in the FE sector.

For further details go to this [link](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Teachers-Toolkit.pdf)...  
[www.niace.org.uk/documents/Teachers-Toolkit.pdf](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Teachers-Toolkit.pdf)  
or contact **Tricia Clark** .

You can become more involved in this work by using the **Moodle** (Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment).

**Moodles** offer a great opportunity for learners and service users, practitioners, policy-makers and researchers to work together, on-line, to share ideas and examples of good practice, and learn from each other.

To find out how easy it is to join [go to](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Register-on-Moodle.pdf)  
[www.niace.org.uk/documents/Register-on-Moodle.pdf](http://www.niace.org.uk/documents/Register-on-Moodle.pdf)

## Contact details and Network Meeting Dates

**Yorkshire and Humberside—Tricia Clark**  
Tel: 07825 382272 [tricia.clark@niace.org.uk](mailto:tricia.clark@niace.org.uk)  
January 2010—Wakefield College

**North East—Ann Creed**  
Tel: 07920 493615 [ann.creed@niace.org.uk](mailto:ann.creed@niace.org.uk)

**North West—Clare Worrall**  
Tel: 07920 493618 [clare.worrall@niace.org.uk](mailto:clare.worrall@niace.org.uk)  
February 2010—venue tbc

**East Midlands—Carol Taylor**  
Tel: 07775 598048 [arolanne.taylor@niace.org.uk](mailto:arolanne.taylor@niace.org.uk)  
25 February 2010 – NIACE, Leicester

**West Midlands—Lesley Talbot-Strettle**  
Tel: 07920 493617  
[lesley.talbot-strettle@niace.org.uk](mailto:lesley.talbot-strettle@niace.org.uk)  
3 February 2010—RAF Museum, Cosford, Birmingham

**South West—Lin Westmoreland**  
Tel: 07917 507487  
[lin.westmoreland@niace.org.uk](mailto:lin.westmoreland@niace.org.uk)  
26 November—The Coast Resource Centre, Weston-super-Mare BS24 7AY  
17 February 2010 - venue tbc

**South East—Jenny Gartland**  
Tel: 07824 691601 [jenny.gartland@niace.org.uk](mailto:jenny.gartland@niace.org.uk)  
4 March 2010 – Woking Surrey

**East of England—Catina Barrett**  
Tel: 07920 493620 [catina.barrett@niace.org.uk](mailto:catina.barrett@niace.org.uk)  
Our meetings are held jointly with the regional mental and employment networks. Further meetings will be organised for Spring.

**London—Alistair Lockhart-Smith**  
Tel: 0116 204 4200 [alistair.lockhart@niace.org.uk](mailto:alistair.lockhart@niace.org.uk)  
29 January 2010—NELFT London

*Venue tbc = venue to be confirmed*

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

**If you would like to comment on this publication, share your examples of good practice or review resources please contact:**

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