

## Funding Case Study

### School-Home Support secures £1m to implement learning and development strategy

School-Home Support (SHS) specialises in providing highly trained school-home support workers who provide practical and emotional support to ensure that all children and young people get the best out of their education. Workers are based in schools where they become part of the pastoral care team, to work with those children and their families who require extra support.

In 2006, SHS started the process of implementing an organisation-wide learning and development strategy, which aims to ensure they continue to provide the highest quality service to the children, young people and their families that they work with.

The SHS learning and development programme is supported by the **McGrath Foundation, Man Group plc Charitable Trust, The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity and the Corporation of London** who together have donated £1 million over three years.

The new programme offers SHS staff opportunities to develop skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and meet the national standards that the government has set for the children's workforce. There are four elements to the SHS CPD programme:

- Ensuring staff have the tools to **identify the skills and knowledge that they may need in the future** to further develop their practice (SHS has developed and undertaken a full **skills audit** of its entire workforce - 180 staff). This has provided them with up-to-date information on the current level of skills, knowledge and experience of their staff, and also acts as an initial assessment for staff. The skills audit was devised using the key responsibilities in the job descriptions of field workers and includes the essential elements of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. It is an opportunity for all field workers to review and reflect on their own levels of skills and knowledge, and begin identifying specific areas where further development is needed so they can respond effectively to the ever evolving role of a School-Home Support worker.
- **Planning how staff will be able to acquire these skills and knowledge.** To equip staff to do this, SHS is using **Individual Learning Plans (ILP)**. Working with their line managers, staff are able to identify the areas of development required using the information gained from the skills audit and from the appraisal and supervision process. Once these needs have been identified, the Learning and Development team devise and deliver an **annual training programme**. The team recognise that attending training programmes is merely one type of learning activity and the team

work to create **different learning opportunities that reflect the varying learning styles of their staff**. The team are also aware that time, location and funding are important issues that they need to address for the success of this programme.

- **Capturing and reflecting on the learning experience.** To encourage this reflective activity, SHS has introduced **reflective diaries**. These diaries are a tool which they hope will help staff capture the essence of the training and learning that they have experienced and will help staff develop their practice in the future.
- **Assessing the extent to which their staff members have achieved their original learning objectives.** The process of **completing the diaries** as well as the subsequent **feedback** from the termly/annual reviews of the ILPs act as an evaluative mechanism to identify the short and long term effectiveness of the learning activities.

### **What next?**

The next stage of the learning and development programme is the development of **external training** to enable staff from other schools to benefit from their experience. SHS has secured additional funding from the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) – the **Occupational Group Funding grant** scheme to support this new piece of work.

### **Need more information?**

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