

NHS Core Learning Programmes Unit

Diversity and disability learning programmes

The Client Issue

The NHS Core Learning Unit (CLU) took over responsibility for all NHS online programmes from the NHS University in July 2005. Courses included manual handling, infection control, infusion devices and health & safety awareness, as well as disability awareness, equality and diversity. After a degree of financial uncertainty, funding was secured from June 2007 from the 10 English strategic health authorities to enable all 1 million plus NHS staff in their trusts to have access to all the CLU's online programmes without further charge.

As a client since 1999, the Grass Roots disability and diversity programmes in workbook and e-learning formats were already well known to the then NHS Executive and to about 100 individual trusts, with typically 2,000 to 5,000 staff utilising them annually. With repeated re-organisation, staff changes and budget revisions, disability and diversity, although important issues for the NHS, were never likely to rival waiting lists or cancer care as 'must haves' for most trusts. With the spread of networks and the greater ability of staff to access e-mail and the internet, e-learning started to be a serious option for managers wanting staff trained without too much expense or disruption. The opportunity to have these 2 Grass Roots programmes as part of the CLU's offer to NHS staff was a key ambition of the CLU's manager Julie Smith who, being based in Yorkshire, was personally familiar with our programmes that have run in many of the regions trust's and hospitals (e.g. Leeds Mental Health Trust, Sheffield Teaching Hospital and Bradford District Care Trust).

Grass Roots Solution

In April 2006 Grass Roots agreed terms for staff to access our diversity programme, Respect for People, via a learning management system version of our standard web-based course. In October 2006 we did the same for our disability programme, Welcoming Disabled People. These went live in July 2006 and January 2007 respectively.

Their programmes carry the NHS logo and allow staff to print off an NHS-branded certificate of completion once they have completed the course and successfully passed an interactive test at the end. In March 2007 we agreed a process whereby trusts could also purchase workbook versions in quantities as small as 50 programmes.

Results

Up till the end of August 2007, 8,216 staff had accessed the diversity programme.

This is clear evidence that it is meeting the needs of the NHS Core Learning Unit, providing easily accessible, valuable learning and measurement.