

Crime reduction initiatives

Funds boost morale, motivation and staff improvement

This case study reviews how national charity CRI (Crime Reduction Initiatives) has used the WDF to support the development of its staff and volunteers and to contribute towards its stretched annual training budget.

Background to the WDF

Skills for Care believes that all staff working in adult social care should be able to access and participate in learning and development, in order to carry out their roles effectively and deliver high quality care.

The WDF supports this ethos. It is a funding stream from the Department of Health and is distributed by Skills for Care. It is available to support employers to make an investment in learning and development that will benefit the organisation, its employees and those that are cared for and supported. The fund focuses on the achievement of qualification units and supports the ongoing professional development of staff across the adult social care sector within England.

Crime Reduction Initiatives and the WDF

CRI is a social care and health charity working with individuals and families that are affected by drugs, alcohol, crime, homelessness, domestic abuse and antisocial behaviour. Projects are delivered

in communities and prisons across England and Wales. They encourage and empower people to regain control of their lives and motivate them to tackle their problems. The organisation has shown phenomenal growth in recent years. Now with 2,450 staff, 1,200 volunteers and around 160 services, the task of managing the company's workforce development is vast.

What they wanted to achieve

One of CRI's core objectives is to ensure that it has a professional and qualified workforce that will support best practice care. For this, CRI requires a large training budget to develop its employees and volunteers. Supporting staff through social care qualifications has been a challenge. The charity is, however, aiming for all staff to be qualified to a minimum Level 3 Health and Social Care Diploma.

Stella O'Neill, CRI's Learning and Development Manager, is keen to use the WDF to maximise workforce development opportunities across the organisation:

"The specialist work that we do can only be achieved through a highly skilled, qualified workforce. We need to provide the people we support with the highest standards of care, so the Workforce Development Fund supports this aim."

What was done

CRI has worked with employer-led Greenwich Partnership to access the Workforce Development Fund. Being a member of the partnership has also opened up a number of networking opportunities

for CRI. Prior to applying for the fund, there was a chance for CRI to discuss and network with other organisations that had already used the fund for learning and development. This proved beneficial and Stella is now in regular contact with the Greenwich Partnership to discuss future funding, learning and workforce development opportunities.

“One of the main benefits of accessing the fund is having the confidence and assurance that our workforce is highly skilled and progressive.”

The WDF has been accessed for two key areas within CRI. Firstly, it has paid for a specific project in Warrington that has essentially supported a team of ten staff and managers to obtain their Level 3 and 5 Diplomas in Health and Social Care. This training was completed in partnership with a local college.

Around 25% of the charity’s employees are from a service user background. Once treatment is complete, CRI offers the people it supports the chance to follow a progression pathway to become peer mentors, before going on to volunteering and potentially becoming part of the workforce. The peer mentor role highlights visible recovery in the service, so plays a vital role within the workforce.

The second project, funded by the WDF, has supported around 30 volunteers in the South East to acquire new skills and formal qualifications through a local learning provider that supports CRI with all of its volunteer training.

CRI has also recently developed its own accredited Open College Network (OCN) Level 2 qualification in Peer Mentoring that is managed internally. All peer mentors are put through the OCN programme to ensure that they have formal qualifications, before becoming volunteers. They are then offered further training for units towards the Level 3 Health and Social Care Diploma, dependent on the area of work.

“This funding has led to a boost in staff morale, especially for the team involved in the Warrington project. It has enabled them to reflect on their practice and think about how they can improve. Having the training together as a team, means that they have become even more motivated and confident. For the volunteers, it’s about giving them a formal qualification and getting them into employment. Promoting their confidence and self-esteem has also been really important.”

What was achieved

Having access to the WDF has allowed the Warrington project to pay for essential front-line training that would not normally have been possible.

For the future, CRI is planning to roll out the diplomas internally and has plans to register as a City and Guilds training centre. The company has also developed its own competency framework based on the mandatory units of the health and social care diploma and some subjects more relevant to its field. It was rolled out in 2013 and now there is a benchmark for tracking, progress, improvement and best practice.

“The main success achieved from the funding has been supporting our volunteers to gain skills that lead to a professional qualification in our field. We would like to continue in this vein by accessing more WDF funding in the future.

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What was learnt

For CRI, one of the biggest challenges around the WDF has been the lack of central coordination for accessing the fund, because of the size of the organisation. Funding has been organised through the local South East employer-led partnership, so it has been difficult to measure the true impact of the fund. Keeping up with the paperwork has also

been somewhat challenging, but Stella believes that working with an employer-led partnership has made this much more manageable.

“The WDF has been a fantastic resource for CRI and I wouldn’t change a thing. It’s been a relatively straightforward process, simple to coordinate and

Skills for Care Recommends

Our website hosts a range of information about the Workforce Development fund and how to access it.

Workforce Development Fund

This page gives a general overview of the WDF including what it is, what it can be used for and who is eligible.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wdf

Workforce Development Fund for grant holders

The information on this page is for grant holders who are responsible for the disbursement of the Workforce Development Fund (WDF).

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wdfgrantholders

Accessing the Workforce Development Fund

The information on this page provides an overview of how you can become eligible for WDF, how to make a claim for it and the terms employers will be bound by when accessing the fund.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/accessingWDF

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