

Skills for Life at

*Report of
the Basic Skills Project
in Nottinghamshire,
Derbyshire and
Lincolnshire*



Summary

From January 2003 73 employees of Asda stores in 10 stores across the East Midlands joined a new project which targeted their basic skills needs.

The project arose from the East Midlands Basic Skills Pathfinder project and developed a strong partnership between Nottinghamshire County Council which led the project, the Asda company and 6 colleges which worked with managers and learner representatives in the stores to develop a tailored 10 week programme of learning.

The aim of the project was to test whether approaching people with basic skills needs, through their employer and within work time, would attract new learners and in so doing allow them to develop skills which they would not otherwise have had the time or inclination to do.

A crucial element of the project was the availability of replacement costs for the release of staff – Asda were keen to support the project and contribute to its success in many ways. But without these replacement costs would not have been able to support it.

An impressive 96% retention rate and xx% undertaking the national tests in literacy and numeracy showed that this approach works. And for all of the learners involvement has made a real difference; in confidence and skills and for some it has led to new jobs and a renewed interest in learning.

"The outcomes from this initiative have been substantial. The key successes come from the improved life skills and personal confidence of our own colleagues - and helping them to open up a whole new world - and witnessing the ripple effect of their learning across their work and home lives - is more than enough for us."

Marie Gill, Head of Organisational Development, ASDA

Blake of the Long Eaton store had something to cheer about as a result of his involvement with the project. Having worked on his presentation skills on the course he was able to make a such a good presentation at work that he was selected to go on a week long company trip to the USA this summer!

Blake

'Every time I spoke to those involved in teaching the ASDA students I was struck by the enthusiasm and sense of privilege the tutor felt at being involved with these learners- 'stars', 'a joy to teach', 'the highlight of my week' were repeated comments- they were all sad when the 10 weeks were over!'

Liz Cousins Project Manager

Glyn often put capital letters in the middle of sentences and generally found punctuation difficult. With 100% commitment, including taking work home, he now has a much better understanding of punctuation and grammar and is writing with confidence. And he has got the learning bug, Glyn has just enrolled on a college course in everyday maths

Glyn

Skills for Life

Seven million people with poor literacy and numeracy skills, including around half a million who struggled with English because it is not their first language.

That was the challenge facing the government in 2001 when they launched the new Skills for Life Strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy

Since that time a lot of new activity has developed and many learners have improved their skills. But there is still a long way to go to reach all those who need help.

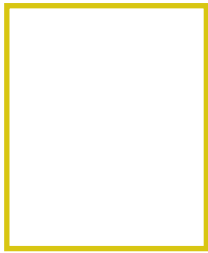
The project within in ASDA is an example of how by working in partnership learning can be made accessible and relevant to people

and perhaps most importantly made to be fun!

The Levels and what they mean

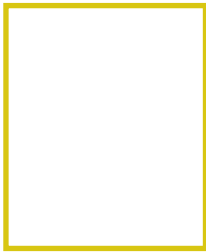
When you hear the words adult literacy or poor basic skills you would be forgiven for thinking that we are talking about people who cannot read or write or who left school with no qualifications. That may be the case for some but the majority of the 7 million are people who have skills in some areas but weaknesses in others. People without a GCSE (or equivalent) in Maths and English are seen to have a basic skills need. The table below shows how basic skills fit with other qualifications.

National Curriculum	Basic Skills	Key Skills	National Qualifications	
		Level 5	Level 5	Post graduate
		Level 4	Level 4	Degree
		Level 3	Level 3	A Level
	Level 2	Level 2	Level 2	GCSE A*-C
NC Level 4/5	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	GCSE D-G
NC Level 3	Entry 3			School Age 9
NC Level 2	Entry 2			School Age 7
NC Level 1	Entry 1			School Age 5



Wendy

Wendy obtained promotion within ASDA shortly after completing the course and said that the Course had given her confidence to apply.summer!



Pat

Pat found that the course helped her look at problem solving in a different way- it helped her coming with alternative solutions to problems that could save time, money.and effort.



Background to the Project

In 2001 Nottinghamshire was one of the 9 regional Pathfinder pilot areas for the new Skills for Life Strategy. A key aspect of the Pathfinder was testing new ways of supporting and delivering basic skills. The Nottinghamshire Pathfinder was responsible for exploring the value of offering fixed rate replacement costs to employers to release staff to undertake a 30 hour basic skills programme within normal working hours. Over 70 employees were supported through this activity with a range of employers from large multi site organisations to sole traders

The pilot in the ASDA store in Hyson Green, Nottingham was so successful that ASDA managers were keen to explore whether the model could be rolled out more widely, ideally across the whole country.

Nottinghamshire County Council which had led the Pathfinder project, bid to the DfES Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit for funding for the replacement costs for a further project. This would fund the model rolled out across Nottinghamshire and Grantham in Lincolnshire. The aim was to recruit 10 learners in each of the 7 stores in Nottinghamshire and in the Grantham store. Further funding was secured from Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council to provide replacement costs for learners in the Spondon (Derby) and Sinfin stores- thus the whole of the ASDA region was involved in the project and 100 learners were targeted.

As a basic skills project, learners across a broad range of skills needs would be targeted. These might include those with significant literacy or numeracy needs; those whose first language was not English (ESOL) or those who had had gaps in their skill development up to level 2.

While the project was employer based there was no obligation for the learning to focus solely on the employees' work roles, indeed ASDA management were keen to see how the learning could help the employees in all aspects of their lives and any positive impact back in the workplace was seen as an additional benefit.

'Whilst recognising that there is always a knock-on benefit from any learning back into the workplace, this was not a key element to drive participation in the scheme. At Asda we have 3 basic beliefs – one of which is "respect for the individual". This value underpins how we work – how we conduct ourselves – and how we treat each other. It was in support of this value that we saw an opportunity to help colleagues with very basic skills to learn. Success would be enhancing confidence and enriching their lives. The only question really was "would this make a difference?" if the answer was "yes" – then we should do it.'
Marie Gill ASDA

For the funders the key to the success criteria would be whether approaching people with basic skills needs, through the employer and within work time, would attract new learners and in so doing allow them to develop skills which they would not otherwise have had the time or inclination to do

List of stores and providers

Arnold
New College Nottingham
Ashfield
West Nottinghamshire College
Grantham
Grantham College
Hyson Green
New College Nottingham
Long Eaton
Broxtowe College
Mansfield
West Nottingham College
Retford
North Nottinghamshire College
Sinfin
Derby College
Spondon
Derby College
West Bridgford
New College Nottingham

How it worked

Developing the project depended on an effective partnership and project team and on efficient planning. ASDA management were keen to ensure that the project did not

require each store to negotiate separately for funding and delivery. And while the individual needs of learners were central to the project, it was agreed at the onset that there would be a common approach throughout the project development.

Once the funding had been secured and the providers identified, the next step was informing the store managers about the project. This took place at a manager's team meeting in September 2002. Store managers were briefed about the Hyson Green pilot; about the problems which poor basic skills can cause for employers and employees and about how the project would develop.

In October 2002 Learner representatives were identified by the store

Managers. To assist them in their role, the Learner reps came together at a training day in November 2002. This outlined the background to the project; provided Basic Skills Awareness training and helped them develop a detailed understanding of their role as learner reps.

The Learner reps were then able to work closely with their local provider to plan a recruitment programme for their store. Some devised their own posters to attract learners; others used their personal contacts to identify potential participants in the project.

Throughout December 2002 the learner reps promoted the programme to potential learners within the stores. The providers worked with the store managers and learner reps to identify the priorities and approaches which would be taken in each store.

Once learners were identified, the provider arranged for one to one confidential interviews with learners and developed Individual Learning Plans for each learner.

January 2003 was chosen as the start date for the programme as it allowed managers to retain temporary Christmas staff to cover for the staff released to attend the courses. The 10 week learning programme commenced* in most of the 9 stores by January. The programmes in the Mansfield, Sinfin and Spondon stores started later. In total 75 learners were recruited and an incredible 73 learners completed the programme (a retention rate of 96%) and 33 were entered

for the National tests in Literacy and or numeracy

By March 2003 most of the 30 hour programmes were completed* and through April the evaluation report was undertaken

Who did what?

ASDA identified a learner rep in each store and funded their time to support development activities, to attend the learner rep training and to recruit and support learners in the stores. The company provided the additional costs of staff release (eg on holiday pay, national insurance) The company also bore the cost of training other staff to undertake the duties of those released to take up the programme

A local provider of basic skills, funded by the Learning and Skills Council and with experience of delivering basic skills in the work place was identified to work with each store. It was important that a local provider undertook this work as learners who wished to were able to continue their study with the college after the project. The provider identified a member of staff who would work as part of the Project team; would work with the Learner rep to promote the programme, screen learners and develop and deliver a programme of 30 hours learning. The provider accessed Learning and Skills Council funding for delivery of programme.

The Project team, chaired by the Nottinghamshire County Council project manager met monthly throughout the project. It steered the activity, shared information on progress, allowed sharing and development of teaching materials and devised a monitoring and evaluation mechanism

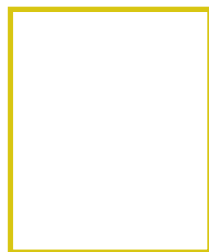
The DfES Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit supported the development of project and funded the ASDA staff replacement costs (£5 per hour for 30 hours); the costs of skills assessment; material and curriculum development and the production of the project report and management costs

Nottinghamshire County Council supported the development of the project by bidding for funding and by working with individual providers to deliver the project. The County

Council provided a project manager who ensured a consistent steer to the project, administered the funding and produced the project reports.

The learner reps in each ASDA store were crucial to the success of the project. Their hard work and enthusiasm for their role was boundless; their detailed knowledge of the company vital and their ability to encourage colleagues to get involved overcame any initial reticence on the part of some learners.

The role of the learner rep was also vital in helping the provider to develop a programme which met the needs of the learners in the store. In some cases the learner rep joined the class to develop their understanding of how basic skills needs are tackled and to support the class tutor, in others they joined the class as a participant.



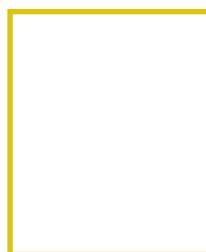
Stuart started with a problem- he found it difficult to write out

ASDA's smiley vouchers (These are vouchers offered to shoppers and filled in by hand by staff) . With help on the course Stuart was soon writing with bags of confidence

Stuart

The course gave Nikki the confidence she needed to apply for customer service training with ASDA- as well as developing her own skills while on the course Nikki was always ready to help her colleagues when they needed help on the computer

Nikki



**Arnold; Provider
New College Nottingham**

Managers, the Learner rep and learners alike greeted the project with enthusiasm in the Arnold store. The 10 learners were recruited from a range of roles and, prior to the start of the programme, the tutor shadowed some of the learners to develop an understanding of their work roles. Teaching took place on college premises where learners had access to computers and tuition consisted of both work related skills and general adult literacy and numeracy exercises.

All the learners responded very positively to the course. They wished to brush up on their literacy and numeracy skills and improve their confidence and communication skills.

'Marie had very little self worth when she joined the course- she told the tutor that she was 'useless'- the tutor did not believe her to be useless and thankfully now neither does Marie! She has come a long way and now has the confidence to take new opportunities including sitting the national test in literacy.'

'Josephine showed tremendous development throughout the course. When she started she said that she would like to be able to write to her daughter in Germany rather than spending a small fortune on phone calls. Using her newly acquired IT skills she was able to write a long letter to her daughter and is now an ardent letter writer. Josephine will be using the skills she has gained in all aspects of her life.'

**Ashfield Provider;
West Nottinghamshire College**

From the outset the project was enthusiastically received at the Sutton in Ashfield store. 8 learners joined the programme- sadly one was unable to complete the 10 weeks due to a stay in hospital. The ASDA colleagues came from various areas of the company; One from catering, a 'greeter' and others from the Post Office and produce- they included an under manager. The group were keen to use Information Technology and Communication to support their learning and laptops were taken into the store for each session.

As some learners were identified as having additional learning needs, the lead tutor was supported by another tutor who came from the College's Additional Learning Support Service and worked with 4 learners.

Jeanette Chapman has been employed by ASDA for about four years and works in the store Post Office and in Home & Leisure. When she joined the group she hoped to "learn a bit more about using a computer" and to "refresh" her Maths and English skills. She did this using a laptop and her newly acquired skills enabled her to create various documents. She says that she enjoyed her computer work and learned how to print posters. She can now use these skills to promote any activities at work, ie: netball poster to encourage people to come along and join in a new sport. Jeanette enjoyed the course so much that she is now acting as a volunteer helping other adults to improve their literacy and numeracy.

Seven learners took the national test in literacy and 2 in numeracy and enthusiasm for the course continues and other ASDA colleagues have approached the Learner Representative to see if there are any opportunities for them to attend a course in the future.

Grantham Provider; Grantham College

The project was not as well received at first at Grantham as in other stores. There was less enthusiasm at first and had it not been for the hard work and enthusiasm of the Learner rep the project would have been less successful than it was.

Provision in Grantham focussed on the needs of learners whose first language was not English (ESOL) Those involved were originally from Portugal and wished to improve their skills in written and oral English. The tutor found the group attentive, enthusiastic and charming. The learners were keen to develop their understanding of grammar and this formed a key component of the 10 week programme

In spite of early interest only 3 learners were recruited to the programme. They were assessed as working at Entry level 1/2. Although none of the learners took an external assessment during the programme all progressed well towards entry Level 3 and are continuing their learning through Grantham College.

When asked to evaluate the impact of the programme on their employees all line managers gave a very positive response. One commented that the member of staff was 90% more confident than before and another that the employee talks to customers more, has a better rapport with colleagues and can understand instructions better.

Valter Renato de Andrade Pontez said that he feels happier about approaching people than before and that he has a solid basis of information to keep going on and develop his studies in English

I hoped that as a result of the project the colleagues would take up more opportunities and they did. There was early negative responses from management but as the project went on those who were involved became much more positive.

Ian Rose Learner rep, Grantham

Hyson Green Provider: New College Nottingham

Tahira Hussain's effervescent personality and enthusiasm quickly made her a valued member of the group and her development was a joy to witness. She enjoyed all the tasks and readily took on demanding ones. She improved in all areas especially spelling and looks forward to continuing her studies after the course ends

As the store where the initial pilot took place there was little need to convince managers or staff of the value of the project. 10 learners were recruited and a programme of learning which included literacy and numeracy linked to the adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum was developed. Learning took place in the xxxxx centre of the college, which was just xx away from the store.

Xx learners completed the programme and xx entered for the national tests in literacy and xx in numeracy

Billy was under the impression that he was not very clever. He had not gone to school very often because it was boring and he could not understand the teachers. After 10 weeks Billy's confidence in his own abilities had improved considerably and he was going on to take the national test in Literacy.

Long Eaton

The programme was well received by staff and managers alike in the Long Eaton store. Through working with managers who identified staff who might benefit from the programme the learner rep recruited 7 learners, one of whom was Rumanian. Following 1:1 informal discussions with each learner in the ASDA store the course took place in the nearby college run Skills Shop where learners had access to a range of facilities.

The programme devised following initial assessments of the learners covered both literacy and numeracy and by the end of 10 weeks 7 learners entered for national tests in literacy and 6 in numeracy!

The tutor was most impressed with his students when one day a total grid lock of the city made him late for the start of class- when he eventually reached them he found that they had completed the task from the previous week and had set about planning the next steps!

Learners and Managers all reported the positive benefits of the course- one manager reported how a member of staff who had previously been reluctant to take on anything new especially if it involved writing or computer work was now eager to take on new tasks.

Andy Dean the Learner come on in leaps and bounds- clearly something he was delighted about- he went on to say that the whole thing has had a positive impact on all of those involved.

Mansfield

After a very delayed start due to the ill health there has been a lot of support from the learner rep and managers at the store. As a result 11 learners were recruited and
All more information here please

There was a very positive response to the project at the Retford store. The learner rep actively promoted it across the store under the banner of 'Recharge your knowledge' 11 learners were recruited (including the learner rep) and 10 completed the course. All passed the national test at level 1 in both literacy and numeracy and built portfolios throughout the course which will be submitted for external (OCN) assessment

All the learners wanted to develop their presentation and, as many had never used computers were keen to develop their IT skills. The training took place in the ASDA store training room and used the nearby college owned Learning Centre to access computers. All learners evaluated the course positively and all managers reported on the positive impact on the skills and confidence of the staff involved. There is considerable interest for a further course to be run at this store

Retford

There was a very positive response to the project at the Retford store. The learner rep actively promoted it across the store under the banner of 'Recharge your knowledge' 11 learners were recruited (including the learner rep) and 10 completed the course. All passed the national test at level 1 in both literacy and numeracy and built portfolios throughout the course which will be submitted for external (OCN) assessment

All the learners wanted to develop their presentation and, as many had never used computers were keen to develop their IT skills. The training took place in the ASDA store training room and used the nearby college owned Learning Centre to access computers. All learners evaluated the course positively and all managers reported on the positive impact on the skills and confidence of the staff involved. There is considerable interest for a further course to be run at this store

The project allowed Tony Scott who had worked in the Butchery department of the East Retford store for 12 years to develop his skills . Tony hates 'hassle' and being able to take a course in the workplace gave him the opportunity to update his maths and English skills. With a young family would have found it hard to go to college in the evening so this was an ideal opportunity for him.

Sinfin Provider Derby College

Identifying funding to deliver the project in the Sinfin and Spondon stores took longer than in the other stores. Due to the existence of another pilot targeting basic skills in employers premises, the ABSSU were not able to fund the project in Derbyshire. Eventually the Learning and Skills Council in Derbyshire agreed to fund the additional costs of the project in these stores and Derby College agreed to take part in the project and to work with Sinfin and Spondon store managers and learner reps.

Due to the late start the Learner reps did not benefit from the training day and recruitment and planning for the course was truncated into a shorter period

It is to the credit of all concerned that the course went so well at these stores. Just 3 learners were recruited at the Sinfin. They were all keen to brush up on their skills especially in the use of computers.

All the learners responded very positively to the evaluation of the course and are planning to continue with their studies in their own time.

The learner rep Chris Coxon reported that the learners were initially very nervous and unsure what to expect, but that week by week it was obvious that their confidence was growing and that they felt that it was good to do something 'for me.'

Spondon (Derby)

Spondon store avidly recruited to the programme and 9 learners joined the programme. The group of learners was mixed including those whose first language was not

English, a student with dyslexia and a learner with cerebral palsy. IT was used as the vehicle for delivery.

Laura Franklin was afraid of using her husband's computer before the course in case she broke it – she now feels confident to use it. For her the best thing about the course was being able to work at her own pace.

Astrid Butler, the Learner rep at the store said

Being involved in the project was positive for me, it has enhanced my people skills and I enjoyed organising the project and seeing week by week the progress that people made on it.

West Bridgford

There was an excellent response to the project from the outset at the West Bridgford store which had recently been identified by the company as one of 10 national stores of learning. This means that the store is responsible for training in ASDA stores within their locality.

In discussion with the store manager it became clear that a group of staff whose work roles were changing needed to develop their communication and mentoring skills. The training needs analysis on 10 staff revealed that they would work on level 2 oral skills.

The learners in the West Bridgford store were not entered for the national tests as most had Level 2 qualifications already.

Veronica West was delighted with the course- it helped her to develop her listening skills as well as her presentation skills- she said the course was a must for everyone, it was set out in a friendly way with tasks to perform which did not make you feel silly or threatened- I am sorry that the course had to end!

Facts and figures

What the learners thought of the course

To assess the impact of the programme we asked all learners to evaluate the course by showing how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements at the end of the course.

By far the majority of learners agreed or strongly agreed that the course had helped them to achieve their aims; that working at their own pace had helped them; that the learning material were easy to use and that the support advice and guidance had been helpful. And this was backed up by comments made by learner on their evaluation forms.

The most interesting was the mixed response to the use of ASDA materials for learning- this produced a strong response in some learners, whilst the majority agreed or strongly agreed that this had been useful, for others it seemed to be irrelevant to their learning or not helpful at all.

What learners gained from the course

While the success of the programme was not judged on the outcome of tests alone the fact that xx % of the learners entered and xx% passed the national tests in literacy and numeracy is to be celebrated

	Literacy Level 1	Literacy Level 2	Numeracy Level 1	Numeracy Level 2
Number entered				
Number passed				

Others gained immediately from involvement in the project – Wendy from the East Retford store gained so much in her confidence that she was able to apply successfully for promotion

Distance travelled

To assess some of the less tangible aspects of attendance on the course, all learners were asked to score themselves on a scale of 0-10

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No response
The course helped me to achieve my aims	29	30	1			
Working at my own pace and on my own learning helped me	30	29	1			
The course materials were easy to use and helped me to learn	31	28		1		
Using ASDA materials to learn with was useful	13	21	8	3	1	14
Learning support, advise and guidance was helpful	48	12				

on the following questions at the start of the course.

- How confident are you about returning to learning?
- How good are you at writing?
- How good are you at using your initiative/finding out for yourself?
- How good are your IT skills?
- How good are you at working on your own?
- How good are you at working with others?
- How good are your communication skills?
- How confident are you about giving presentations?
- Are you ready to progress and use the skills you are learning?

At the end of the 10 weeks the learners were asked to answer the same questions. Across all learners there was an average 25.2% (add sinfin 27% Spondon 22.8%increase in their assessment of their skills and abilities at the end of the course.

What the learner reps thought

All learner reps felt that the project had lived up to their expectations and the overall response was that they had been pleased to be involved and proud of their colleague's progress.

'The course was most definitely positive in all areas'

'It was good to see colleagues confidence to come on by leaps and bounds'

The majority reported positive support from management with General Store Managers and Line managers who were keen to allow staff to take up new opportunities, only a minority had had to work hard to get this support. All felt that the learners had gained a great deal from the course.

And many felt that they had gained personally from involvement in the course either as participants or through developing skills to help their colleagues.

Ashfield Learner rep felt that being involved in the project had helped her organising skills and that it had been very good for her personal development.

Sandra who was a learner rep and also joined the course said that she and her colleagues had done things they thought they were not capable of and feel that with all the help they got will do even more in the future. A very enjoyable 10 weeks!

Others commented on the support the learners got from other colleagues:
'They got full support from everyone- the general store manager, line managers and other colleagues. Those involved could talk openly and with pride about what they were doing at college.'

What the Line managers said

All Line Managers reported that the project had met the aims they had for the member of staff, many remarking that it had more than met their objectives.

'Absolutely positive!- I would like to see more of the projects running in our store on a yearly basis.'

Some commented on the impact on the individual, many remarking on the increased levels of confidence.

'It has improved her confidence and made it easier for her to tackle new projects and challenges'

'Her confidence in spelling and pronouncing (ESOL student) has improved 90%!'

'She is more keen to take on new tasks and learn new things- before lack of confidence stopped her taking things on!'

And others commented on the impact on others:-

'It has had a positive impact on those around him!'

' Other colleagues are asking when they can do the course!'

And while some felt that the tangible benefits for the company might take longer to see many suggested that this would be a long term outcome

Other issued affected a minority of line managers, these included suggesting that the day chosen could have been more convenient

and another felt that the timing – just after Christmas was not convenient, others were keen to have detailed reports on the progress of individual staff- all these points will be considered in future planning.

Store Manager evaluation

All store managers who responded to the evaluation felt that the project had met their objectives.

One General Store manager reported- *'The colleagues really enjoyed the course, learnt new skills and gained more knowledge and now they want more! They love the idea of being able to learn new skills in the work environment- but also enjoy the time out of the store'*

Another reported that the course had had a positive effect throughout the store. And another commented :- *'Colleagues have taken on extra tasks that they would have shied away from. They have been so positive that this has spread to others who might have been sceptical about the course and its impact'*

Key aspects of making it work

- A positive and responsive attitude on the part of the company ASDA is a company which positively encourages the development of its staff. This project was seen as a contribution to the personal development of those involved. The commitment and sponsorship and ongoing support of a senior manager at the centre was key to the success of the project.
- Getting managers on board at an early stage. The project was introduced to General Store Managers at a regional meeting and strong backing and updates on progress from Head Office helped to ensure commitment and kept managers 'in the loop' The support and commitment of managers made it more possible for learners to take part in the project.
- Making it simple for the employer. The company were keen to work in partnership on a model which did not require them to negotiate with a number of different funders and different

providers. As a result a single project manager liaised with the company throughout and this eased the process. The project provided a model which, while responding to the individual needs of learners, negotiated the funding and minimised the paperwork for the store

- The learners
The commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of the learners was key to the success of the project. Attendance was significantly higher than on another basic skills programmes, more completed the programme and where it was offered, a higher proportion of learners undertook the national tests.
- Timing the programme to suit the business
The project was carefully planned to take account of the most busy periods for the company. The post Christmas period was chosen as this allowed managers to retain temporary seasonal staff to cover for released staff. The summer period is affected by school holidays and staff holidays and the period up to Christmas is particularly busy.
- Allowing learners to study in work time
Many workers find it difficult to classes in their own time alongside work and home commitments. By offering a 10 week programme in work time made it possible for some to take up learning
- The importance of replacement costs for release of staff
This aspect of the project was key to its success. The company was prepared to take part and to provide for the costs of the use of training facilities and to cover on costs and the release of staff as learner reps But a contribution to the costs of release of staff was vital to their involvement
- The role of the learner reps
The learner Representatives were crucial to the success of the project, enthusiasm for their role; their detailed knowledge of the company vital and their ability to encourage their colleagues to get involved overcame initial reticence on the part of some learners.

∑ Offering the national tests as part of the package

Offered as a natural part of the package the national tests in literacy and or numeracy were seen as positive opportunity to take the national tests to demonstrate their achievements while on the course and achieve a nationally recognised award

∑ Being flexible about where delivery takes place

Flexibility over where the course took place was helpful. Using a combination of company premises and college premises allowed learners to access ICT provision and to become familiar with their local college

What next

∑ Many of the learners have now 'got the bug' and are going onto further study in their own time. Others gained considerably from the course and have used it to gain the confidence to apply for further development within the company

∑ Nationally, the question of how to support basic skills provision through the involvement of employers is being explored. 12 Employer Training Pilots across the country are trying out new ways of encouraging the involvement of employers in training.

∑ All those involved in this project, and the many people in the ASDA stores who have been asking- 'when is the next course? - can I go on it ?' hope that the outcome will be that there are more opportunities like this in the future.

Page 10

Egs of materials

Egs will be copied from some supplied (At present I have some from Arnold/Hyson Green and Retford) These will be copied behind the text

A combination of resources were used to meet the needs of individuals and the group as a whole. These included ASDA materials - forms, smiley vouchers, advertising and Health & Safety - and computer-based resources to improve 'technical' skills such as spelling and punctuation. Many resources were bespoke and used to develop both literacy and numeracy skills

One learner remarked

The material we used was fantastic- very straight to the point and informative
Recruiting learners