

CASE STUDY



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | South
West

The Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL)

“Working towards the Investors in People Bronze award helped pull the team together and to focus on continuous improvement. Everyone in the team contributed and through this approach we ensured everyone knew our vision for our service. The Continuous Improvement Team has been vital in helping drive forward improvement through all areas of our service.”

Vicky Thomas
Manager

BACKGROUND

Size:	59 employees
Sector:	Local Government
Location:	Taunton, Somerset
Status:	Most recently recognised November 2009. First recognised in 2008. Achieved Bronze level in 2009.

THE ORGANISATION

The Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL) is part of Somerset County Council's Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD). SCIL was formed in April 2008 and so is still a relatively new grouping. It provides training for nearly all areas of the children's workforce.



The Continuous improvement Team (CIT)

Main impacts:

- **Improvements to and combination of greater understanding and knowledge of team processes and initiatives including Leadership Framework and line management**
- **It has drawn members of the team closer together as they have considered the 'bigger picture'; at the same time it has raised aspirations and provided a sense of enjoyment and pride in achievement**
- **Making the time to understand the requisites and valuing and sharing the purpose alongside other identified priorities**

The Challenge

Some members of the Workforce development team had been involved in the Investors in People assessment process previously and had been assessed against the Standard, achieving this in March 2008. Since that date, staff had moved across from other work areas and bases to form the Integrated Workforce Development team. (Now known as Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL)). Whilst the team was not due for a review until March 2011, it was felt that Investors in People was an appropriate tool to use to help review progress on recommendations which arose from the last assessment. It was also used to consider the areas where the team needed to develop further to meet its objectives and consider any implications for all staff on the forming of the new team.

The Strategy

The team agreed that we would concentrate on development in those specific areas as identified during the advisory process which would, not only provide evidence of effective performance for evaluation against the extended Framework, but more importantly give the team a clear focus for improvement. It was also agreed to raise levels of aspiration to achieve the Bronze award.

We had received information about the new extended framework, so in order to prepare for our meeting with the Adviser, we took time to refocus on the Standard and consider what progress had been made on the previous recommendations. This also prompted us to work more closely together as a team and to share our objectives more widely, not just within the Senior Management Team but at a whole team day. As a result we gained considerable feedback on what we were already doing well. Additionally, the process identified specific areas which needed more development and which were felt to pose more of a challenge for the team. Our objectives were based on an individual staff member's perspective in the achievement of personal objectives and upon whole team achievement. The primary objectives were:

- To involve and inform the whole team in the Investors in People process through which team strengths and development areas were identified
- Demonstrate that we work well together as a team, communicate well and value each other regardless of role
- To provide the best customer service
- To aim for excellence in all areas
- To review how well we have formed the new team and the effect on all staff.

The Management Team were aware that there were specific areas where they wanted to evaluate progress and extend further, e.g. line management structure and process; but also that other areas could be identified as part of the assessment review.

The Process

The Team were already encompassing wide areas of the Standard within their work, although many individuals were not aware of the content within the Standard and Extended Framework. Processes were already in place for changing behaviour and developing skills where identified

A meeting with the assessor was arranged to discuss the Extended Framework and consider the objectives of the team and this helped to clarify expectations. This enabled us to fully inform team members on what they were working towards. However the team recognised that getting all staff members to 'same place' and changing differing attitudes would be time consuming. The work of the Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) was invaluable as was having a lead officer who managed and oversaw the whole process.

All staff felt part of the entire Investors in People cycle and were encouraged to consider the Indicators within specific Investors in People sessions incorporated into whole team meetings. This helped to ensure all staff would support the process and feel part of the team's overall objective

The Assessor was extremely helpful, knowledgeable and understanding throughout the whole process. We have a number of young members of staff who had never been through such a process, the Assessor was extremely caring in her approach to working with these members of staff.

The Results

Investors in People has helped staff generally to feel valued as it has provided more open management processes. A priority at SCIL is the retention of staff and staff turnover is very low with the result that we have lower recruitment costs. Investors in People has identified more opportunities for staff who work at similar levels, to work together more effectively and creatively. The clear line management structures and processes help identify issues early and have improved communication within the organisation. The CIT action plan has helped to drive forward improvements in communication, safer recruitment, evaluations, health and well-being. It has helped to refocus the team and there have been an increased number of initiatives, including more focus on leadership and management training for staff. Individual team members have been given more responsibility and involvement in specific work projects. Everyone at SCIL is proud of our Investors in People status.