



*I loved the job,
loved working.
I didn't want it to end.*



*There need to be more
schemes like this for young
people like me who don't know
where they are going or what they
want. I was lucky. I found out
I love working with wood and
now I am doing Carpentry
at College.*



L-earn is a social enterprise approach to helping young people develop the skills, confidence and experience they need to progress to full apprenticeships, training and work.

L-earn Evaluation Executive Summary

This is a summary of the full independent evaluation of the L-earn pilot project undertaken in November 2011.

East Sussex County Council commissioned this project to pilot employment with training as part of their preparation for Raising the Participation Age (RPA) and to specifically target the most vulnerable young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET). This includes those who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and other vulnerable groups including care leavers and young offenders.

The pilot focused in Hastings & Rother where we have the largest % of young people who are NEET.

Given the vulnerabilities and specific needs of this cohort, social enterprises were encouraged to bid for this contract, with the view to them providing work-based learning opportunities within their supportive employment environments.

A partnership of local social enterprises won the contract and together they formed L-earn: Rother Voluntary Action, 1066 Enterprise, Hastings Trust and Finding Futures with Hastings Furniture Service who are the lead organisation.

Participants

The project was specifically aimed at vulnerable young people aged 16-18, from the Hastings and Rother areas who had struggled to progress through conventional education routes. The young people were therefore likely not to have achieved qualifications or had under-achieved at school and would struggle to compete in the labour market.

They were all unemployed, several had dropped out of college or school and many had mental or physical health, housing and confidence issues. More than 1/3 were care leavers.



Real practical work was an important part of every placement. Here participants are loading items for an HFS delivery.



Watch the Learn video made by Entertainment Workshops:
www.hfs.org.uk/learn.html



Amber Rudd MP visited Learn placements who were busy in the HFS workshops learning how to paint furniture

The L-learn model

The L-learn partners developed a model that creates a range of real entry level jobs with training and support. Since the jobs are within local social enterprises, the young people also learn how rewarding it is to benefit the wider community.

The pilot project ran from January to September 2011. This was a partnership project which relied on close joint working to achieve desirable outcomes for 11 young people aged 16-18 who were not in employment education or training who also had BESD or other additional support needs e.g. care leavers.

Work Placements

For the pilot, a range of entry-level jobs were created in local social enterprises run by HFS and Hastings Trust, so that participants could “earn while they learned”.

The participants were paid for 16 hours work each week at the minimum wage rate for their age. This meant that those who were in receipt of JSA were able to “sign off” at the Job Centre.

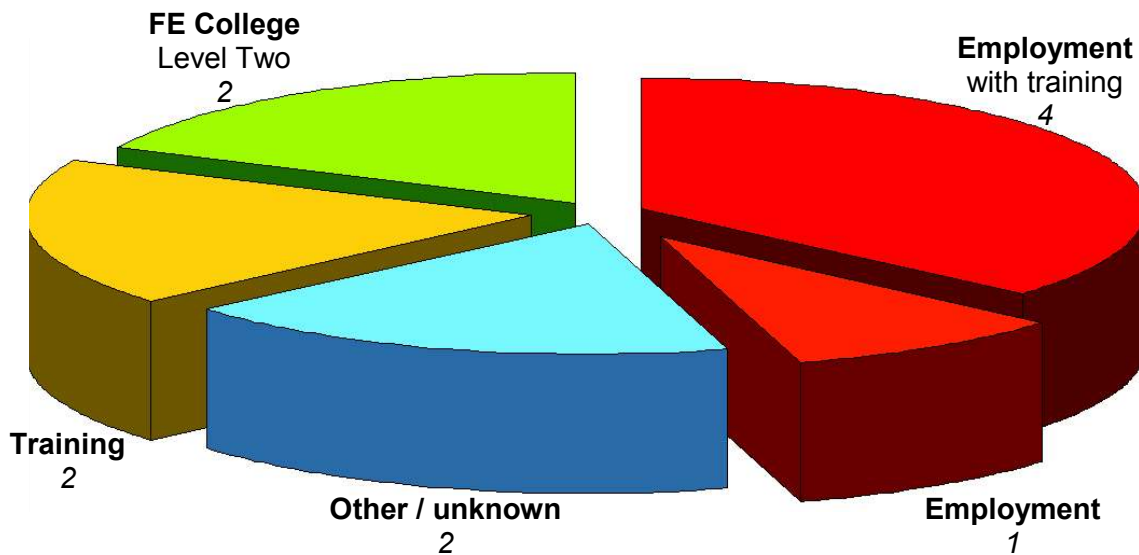
Placements included:- Repairing, restoring, redecorating furniture. Warehousing and display of goods. Removals, collections and deliveries. Customer services. Organic soap-making. Packing and preparing orders. General administration and reception.

Training

The following training was available in addition to the “on the job” training and strong management support which took place on a day to day basis:

- ▶ Literacy
- ▶ Numeracy
- ▶ First Aid at work
- ▶ Health & Safety at work
- ▶ Customer Service
- ▶ Furniture Restoration
- ▶ Personal Effectiveness
- ▶ Apprenticeship info session
- ▶ Self-employment workshops

L-earn progressions



Outcomes

The vast majority of the young people completed the 26 weeks, with 9 out of the 11 progressing into education, training or work.

One secured a permanent full-time job, 4 moved into employment with training, 2 enrolled on Level 2 courses at FE Colleges and 2 went on to a training provider course.

Participants engaged in numeracy and literacy training for two hours each week at Finding Futures in small groups of 4 (reflecting the level at which they were first assessed) working through activity packs.

There was a strong element of peer support as well as help from the trainer at FF. The atmosphere of success, fun and validation encouraged the learners to try test papers and take exams.

The achievements were really impressive:

Four improved their numeracy by one level, two reaffirmed their level and one learner enhanced his numeracy qualification by two levels (From Entry Level 3 to Level 2). Literacy had similar results.

Four participants also achieved a Creative Craft Level 1 in the HFS furniture restoration workshop.

Conclusions drawn from the evaluation of the L-earn pilot

L-earn was a well-conceived and delivered pilot project demonstrating the effectiveness of good partnership working. More importantly, L-earn helped vulnerable, long term unemployed young people to gain important skills, confidence and experience.

The young people:

Gained **skills and experience** that would make them more attractive to potential employers

Measurably improved their literacy and numeracy

Gained a real **perspective on the world of work**, how to conduct themselves and requirements of employers

Often gained a **career direction** they would never have considered or had never heard of before

Raised their **self-confidence** and learned team working, increased responsibility, time keeping and a range of other skills

Began to plan their futures; this often involved further study despite having usually had a poor experience of formal education

The **targets were exceeded** and there was added value brought to the project through the range of activities the participants could choose from.

Training was of a consistently **high standard** and quality

L-earn is **cost-effective** and was provided within the project budget

Monitoring and record keeping was at an **appropriate** informative level

The partnership worked well, partly because the partners worked together regularly and knew what to expect from one another, but also because their **communication** was so effective.

Most of the participants became **much more employable** as a result of participating in L-earn.

I was late a few times and got a verbal warning, but it was done so that I understood why it was important to turn up on time...I started to see why it was important not to let other people and myself down. The warning showed me it was serious. My manager was supportive, not horrible!

Need for further provision

This pilot focussed on the most vulnerable of our NEETs and was significantly over-subscribed, with 33 young people being interviewed for 10 places.

Young people and practitioners have told us this is the type of provision that is needed.

Schools have also approached us directly and asked whether we could develop a bridging programme to L-earn for their Yr11's, which we would be keen to implement if we can get the post 16 L-earn option mainstreamed, ideally through Foundation Learning Funding from the YPLA.



L-earn placements met local MPs, including Government Minister Greg Barker MP (pictured above), to explain how and why this approach worked for them.

I used not to like people telling me what to do or how to do things and reacted quite badly to that. At school, if a teacher shouted at me I yelled back! Here, if they tell you that you have to do it only one way then that is what you must do because otherwise you could injure yourself or someone else. And they say it in a way that is good, you don't feel bad when they tell you.

The full independent evaluation of the Learn project was conducted by Mary Denning and can be downloaded from: www.hfs.org.uk/learn.html

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