



# Newsletter 05

## Our Modules include:

*Disability*

*Age*

*Religious Belief*

*Gender*

*Sexual Orientation*

*The Welsh Language*

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*The Engaging Diversity Development Partnership is now established in providing innovative e-learning with 506 beneficiaries completing the Disability module and 347 finishing the Gender module at the end of August. The Age module will be available in September. This has enabled the Development Partnership to reach large numbers of people and provide an approach to learning that engages and informs them about diversity issues. New approaches to working and learning together using different techniques, blending e-learning with face to face session have been piloted. Encouraged by this, partners during the 3<sup>rd</sup> DP Meeting in July at Llandrindod Wells are now looking to extend the use of e-communities to develop and share best practice.*

### CASE STUDY

In July, Gwynedd Council was in the process of implementing an ambitious and innovative corporate training scheme which will provide training opportunities for over 6,500 staff. Equality training features in all staff training programmes, and presents a special challenge to the corporate training team and is delivered bilingually in accordance with Gwynedd Council's language policy.

Gwynedd Council initially trialled the modules with staff across its 4 Directorates and at varying levels of responsibility. During the pilot course they were given the option of completing the 3 modules (Race, Disability and Gender):

- in their workplace during the week preceding the training session
- by coming to the IT training suite to study the modules on the morning before the training session.

The formal afternoon training session

was led by the Council's Equalities Officer. All who attended the training were asked to complete the remaining on-line modules as they become available. Staff were issued with certificates on successful completion of the first 3 modules, and the intention is to issue a further certificate on completion of the other modules.

The pilot was subject to a rigorous quality control assessment and the feedback was very positive. The managers involved chose a combination of these options and everyone agreed that this choice and flexibility was extremely advantageous. The session provided an opportunity to discuss and apply the information acquired from the modules using real scenarios, and in so doing, developing an understanding of equality issues.

E-learning has been identified as a valuable learning tool to deliver training to a large number of staff spread over a large geographical rural area. Due to the diverse backgrounds of staff, several approaches to using the *Engaging Diversity* online modules will be piloted and the training team is of the opinion that a 'blended'

approach to e-learning is most effective. One lesson learnt is the importance of targeting small cohorts of staff, and setting definite deadlines for completion of modules.

### RESEARCH

As part of the University of Wales, Bangor research to assess changes in people who view the modules, a survey was completed by 116 respondents from Wrexham County Council over 10 training groups. Analysis of the results has identified 3 factors existing within the organisation. Each factor has strong relationships to the others and development of these areas can have positive influences on diversity awareness and climate.

1. Willingness to combat discrimination
2. Positive views about education and training
3. Positive equality climate in existence

Respondents' comments on the importance of diversity awareness was highlighted by their understanding of the benefits of diversity training in the workplace and the opportunity to look of ways of dealing with discrimination on a daily basis. "If everyone is aware of diversity within the workplace no

discrimination should occur."

### TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERS

Activities continued in the Transnational Partnership which has been named 'Collaborative Learning'. Preparations were underway to meet in Portugal for the second Transnational meeting between the partners from Wales, Portugal, Poland and Slovakia. An e-community guideline and approach were posted into the Knowledge Sharing e-Community for discussion and the Portuguese forwarded an agenda for the next meeting. The Partnership will work on key objectives including IT skills teaching and the effective use of e-Communities of Practice.

If you are interested in participating in a moderator training course please contact BTC Group at 01492 871 111. This course will cover some of the techniques for moderating an e-community and using the community to develop and share best practice. This will help partners get the most out of their e-communities, assist in obtaining viewpoints of the modules, and also encourage dialogue and discussion of equality and diversity issues.