

NIACE Development and Research



Key Findings



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Skills Development in the Fens

Abstract

The project formed part of the Fens Rural Pathfinder Project in the East of England

- The launch of a promotional programme *Test the Fens* designed to encourage adults, including local residents, local authority and other employees, and parents to engage in developing their literacy and numeracy and to achieve national qualifications.
- To work with local authorities to encourage them to adopt a whole organisational approach to Skills for Life (SfL).
- To develop and pilot the use of mobile phone technologies to develop skills in family learning settings and to evaluate the impact and benefits of mobile phone technologies for learning.

Research methodology:

- Launch of *Test the Fens* at 10 locations across the Fens;
- Establishment of referral mechanisms for learners;
- Support offered to local authorities using the *Move On* approach;
- Development of resources to support m-learning in family learning settings;
- Piloting the use of the resources across Cambridgeshire and Suffolk;
- Preparation of an evaluation report.

Key Findings

The main conclusions of the project are:

As a result of the Test the Fens campaign it proved possible to raise awareness generally across the Fens in relation to SfL, to support capacity building in Kings Lynn, and to make a real impact on the numbers of referrals to courses across the Fenland area. It has demonstrated the

effectiveness of a collaborative model involving a range of providers and based on face to face recruitment of learners. The model is transferable both to other areas but also in relation to use in other contexts such as the workplace.

Mobile phone technology proved very popular with learners and their children and is a valuable addition to the range of teaching aids available to family learning tutors.

Recommendations

- ❖ A series of detailed recommendations for family learning services, those developing mobile phone technology, and funders and planners, can be found in the evaluation report.

Output

- ❖ 10 'Test the Fens' roadshows;
- ❖ 232 potential learners referred to SfL delivery organisations;
- ❖ 101 learners achieve SfL national qualifications;
- ❖ 23 learners still undertaking SfL courses prior to taking their national tests;
- ❖ M-learning resources developed for use in family learning settings and available to all family learning providers across the East of England;
- ❖ resources piloted during 15 family learning sessions involving 92 adults and 67 children;
- ❖ evaluation report on m-learning and family learning.

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Requests for 'Key Findings' in other formats, such as large print, are welcome. We would be pleased to consider your request.



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