



case study

TRURO COLLEGE

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the project

Construction of two new buildings at Truro College to create its delivery of higher education, as part of the Combined University of Cornwall overall development plan.

The Programme has invested £1.67million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the capital build project which has a total cost of £3.9million, as well as in the European Social Fund (ESF) in a number of training projects.

The Helford and Allen buildings have jointly provided a range of facilities to support delivery of higher and other education and training opportunities. The Allen building houses a Centre of Vocational Excellence for Care, supporting employee development work in the care sector. The Helford building makes particular provision for training and education in the performing arts. It also houses a special parenting unit and a unit for young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

measures of equal opportunities adopted

Truro College took a twofold approach to integrating equal opportunities into development of these buildings:

- Through the incorporation of physical accessibility features into building construction, meeting and exceeding the requirements of building regulations (Part M) and providing other important features such as close proximity to public transport and childcare facilities.
- More broadly through ensuring that the College's policy of inclusivity is applied to all activities in the two buildings. The College has an open access policy, enacted through widening access and participation in education, training and community activity, together with a strong emphasis on meeting community and employer needs. It therefore aims to support individual student needs and respond to local needs.

equal opportunities



Objective One is part-financed by the European Union



The Objective One Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly



COVE now provides food hygiene courses in languages other than English in the new Allen Building at Truro College

To enable equality of access to opportunities, including to all levels of training and sustainable employment, for people who are disadvantaged in the economy including by virtue of age, ethnicity, rural isolation etc

The Allen building has enabled a dedicated resource centre for a Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE) in Care to be established, designated on the basis of local employment needs.

The COVE project team has developed courses to respond to employer/business needs and achieve inclusivity. For example a need for food hygiene courses in languages other than English was identified as a result of discussion with Environmental Health Officers, in order to support restaurant staff who do not have English language skills meet core business requirements. A first course in Bengali was held in May 2004, attended by 22 people. A second course in Turkish was held in June 2005 and one in Cantonese is planned.

The COVE team also identified a shortage of people in the care sector at Level 3 in particular. It therefore developed routes to achieving Level 2 and 3 qualifications through distance learning, enabling students to work from home to achieve their college element of the course (the remainder being through work experience). Specific efforts have been made to attract men into the care course as they are under represented in the care sector. Measures taken have



included male role models in publicity and participation in a radio programme about 'Men in Childcare'.

The special parenting course, using space in the Helford building, arose in response to a request for assistance from the Special Parenting Service, to help establish a training programme combining parenting skills with developing qualifications (e.g. basic skills). It supports parents who would otherwise find it difficult to progress into training and employment because of learning difficulties. The 'Parents Opening Doors' course supports parents with childcare and transport costs. Some 20 students have attended the course so far, of which five have progressed into further training (for example one parent moving onto a Level 1 childcare training course) and three into employment.

To enable equality of access to opportunities for people with disabilities, including to all levels of training and sustainable employment

At the practical level, accessibility features in the buildings make it easier for students with specific needs to use them, for example automatic entrance doors. The College has 60 learning support assistants supporting students with special needs throughout the College such as a blind student taking a performing arts course in the Helford building. Features such as the automatic doors, level access throughout the ground floor and internal lifts, help to improve accessibility. The design principles of the buildings are seen as important, in creating the right inclusive feel to the College, and developing the culture of the College as a place where everyone is welcome to come for training and education.

Construction of the Helford building enabled Truro College to make specific training provision for young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, through creation of a purpose built training suite. This accommodates some 26 young people and focuses on development of communication skills as a means of improving their quality of life. For the College, it is an example of providing inclusive access to lifelong learning and the course is financially supported by the Learning and Skills Council.

benefits of equal opportunities

As a principle, Truro College sees a dual economic benefit of integrating equality of access into training and education opportunities. Firstly it allows individuals to achieve their full potential to contribute to economic activity in Cornwall. Through responding to employer needs and the needs of individuals, people can be encouraged to achieve their personal economic potential in whatever way they can and economic

regeneration can be supported. Secondly it extends the market for people who attend the college, helping to support the College as a business entity. With over 1000 employees (full and part time) the College makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

The College has taken advantage of the space provided by the Allen and Helford buildings to integrate equal opportunities issues into training activity in response to business/employer needs. Despite the challenge of finding appropriate trainers with both language and food hygiene training skills, the College reports positive feedback from the food hygiene course in Bengali. Participants felt confident in attending the course because there was no language problem. The success of these initial courses has prompted the COVE team to look more strategically at working with different ethnic groups, to help people progress into other training opportunities. Equally, initial work on the care courses has also progressed into further development of Higher Education access courses in counselling, to support work in the care sector. Moving into further training has also been an outcome from the special parenting course.

lessons learnt

The College mission is to be as responsive as possible to local needs to support regeneration in Cornwall. David Walrond, Director of Curriculum and Quality who leads on Equal Opportunities issues at the College says: *"If we do not take on board issues of equality of opportunity, we are not being genuinely responsive. Equally we have a responsibility as a business and large local employer to maintain and develop our business. Our policy of inclusivity is integral to both fulfilling our college business development and achieving our wider community regeneration goals."*

Comments from parents attending 'Parents Opening Doors' include:

From one student moving into employment: *"POD was really good because it helped me see what I am capable of. I wouldn't have felt confident enough to try for a job like this if I hadn't done POD."*

From a student moving into further training: *"The POD course was great. It really boosted my confidence and made me believe in myself again. I was able to work on my basic skills."*

For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.