



Client's Corner October 2007

Feedback from Sheila Traskowskie Learning and Development Manager

Helena Housing is a housing association with 13,100 homes in St Helens, Merseyside.

There is a strong emphasis on leadership and organisational culture and developing our employees and their managers, ensuring they have the right skills and attitudes to take the business forward. We aim to do this by delivering cultural change, management development, team involvement and recognition so that our people are innovative, motivated and commercially focused.

The ILM accredited coaching programme was developed, in partnership with CFM Consulting, to bring change in behaviours and to contribute to the specific aims set out in our organisational development strategy. All senior and middle managers attended the programme over eighteen months. Their backgrounds, behaviours and leadership styles varied widely, and the programme was designed to set a new standard, which was people centred and empowers teams to take responsibility and think for themselves.

The coaching programme is a key element in creating a learning organisation. Its aim is to ensure that learning and development takes place in the workplace, and not simply in the classroom or at a training event. It seeks to maximise learning by tapping into the skills and experience of people across the organisation and encouraging individuals to share their expertise with others.

Measurement

Improvement in learner performance is measured through a before and after 360 degree feedback exercise and a team climate questionnaire. Although results of these are confidential to the learner, outcomes are seen to be positive. This is borne out by feedback received from participants and the people they manage.

"I have used coaching to establish a better climate in the team that I manage. I have used the practical tools like questionnaires to establish where we needed to improve. This has led to greater satisfaction, reduced stress and more flexibility in the team." Paul Ody, Building Services Manager, Helena Housing

"Coaching helped me move my team from instruction based thinking into a team based on self help, thinking out its own solutions and sharing experience." Greg Parkinson, Treasury and Income Manager, Helena Housing.