

TUC~unionlearn Award 2014 Winner ~ Susan Austin

Susan Austin is the Librarian at the South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust. She has been supporting the Bridges to Learning project in the capacity of her ULR role.

Bridges to Learning encourages workers in the Health, Social Care and Education sectors to develop in their jobs through participating in learning and training. They work with employers to create recognised progression routes for individuals and teams to move forward.

Susan has been involved with Bridges to Learning project in her Union role for the last 18 months; the aim of the project is to encourage hard to reach learners and to create progression pathways mainly for the Bands 1-4 staff groups.

Part of her volunteer role has involved raising awareness around disabilities by organising events which encourage underrepresented groups in the workplace. She has produced the publicity leaflets which cover equality and diversity and designed the leaflets in an inclusive format, considering the needs of a diverse community such as English Speakers of other languages, people with Literacy

needs and also other disabilities such as Dyslexia.

Furthermore, Susan has been involved in organising the Dyslexia Awareness sessions for the staff who think they may have Dyslexia or who deal with the patients with Dyslexia.



Susan Austin winner of the TUC~unionlearn Award with Beth Farhat, TUC, category sponsors



equality north east

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Lunch and Learning sessions have also been organised by Susan. They give staff opportunities to attend short in-house sessions during their lunch which they found extremely useful.

All the work which Susan has been involved in has encouraged disadvantage groups to participate in lifelong learning and self-development. It has given staff confidence to progress their career.

The main outcomes of the equality practices are to encourage hard to reach and disadvantaged groups of learners such as senior staff, needs of mid-life workers, Young Apprentices, people from the BAME community and those who have not been engaged in any sort of learning for a long time.

Staff members have attended the training and provided really positive feedback.

Outcomes from the training include:

- 23 staff members successfully completed the NCFE qualifications
- 6 young apprentices completed the British Sign Language course
- 11 staff members from different job roles completed the 9 weeks Sign Language course
- Over 100 staff members attended the Lunch and Learn sessions

- A good number of staff members attended other learning activities

The impact of the activities which Susan has been involved in has resulted in more staff engaging in lifelong learning and increased attendance on the learning activities.

The equality agenda is one of the main aims of this partnership work and to address this the partnership organised in house training on topics including Equality and Diversity, Dyslexia Awareness, Mental Health, British Sign Language, Confidence Building, Academic Writing Skills and Minute Taking. The aim of these sessions was to raise awareness of equality, to build confidence and to enhance the knowledge of the staff members dealing with patients, relatives and carers.

The impact has increased understanding of equality amongst staff and to date they have engaged hundreds of staff.

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