

Red Kite Learning Strategic Plan 2008-11

By 2011 Red Kite Learning will be recognised as one of the leading charities making a real difference to people's lives and to the success of organisations through high-quality learning, employment opportunities and capacity building services.

Executive Summary

Red Kite Learning is a charity and company limited by guarantee. The charity's income is primarily derived from statutory sources such as European Social Funds, the Learning and Skills Council, the London Development Agency and local councils.

Our Strategic Plan looks ahead three years to 2011 and identifies specific strands of activity and the major goals that the Red Kite Learning will work towards. The plan sets out the direction we need to take if we are to sustain and develop our range of activities and contains new organisational objectives that will enhance our performance and strengthen our ability to operate in an increasingly competitive market.

Four key aims have been identified and will provide the framework for the delivery of our work. The plan indicates that next three years will focus on strengthening and developing our position, whilst maintaining the fundamental ongoing improvements in how we operate on a day to day basis, as well as continuing to meet the growing demands for high-quality, cost-effective services, which will ensure continual improvement.

Whilst providing expanded and higher quality services to our beneficiaries and partners, the implementation of the strategy will also support our aim to diversify and expand our funding sources. Red Kite Learning will plan and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy, seeking diverse and sustainable sources of funding through a variety of means such as trust grant applications and generation of revenue through our fee-based income from our range of services.

Red Kite Learning is driven by a number of quality initiatives and standards including Investors in People, Matrix, the Green Mark and the Skills for Life Quality Initiative. One of the key objectives will be to work towards an over-arching organisational quality mark such as ISO 9000.

A further key priority for Red Kite Learning will be the development and implementation of a marketing and communications strategy, which will support and complement our core activities. It is vital that we raise our profile through a structured, continuous process and that we celebrate and share our achievements.

Introduction

The purpose of this strategic plan is to maximise the return on our efforts over the next three years by defining what we want to do, for whom we want to do it and how we will know if we have succeeded.

The anticipated external benefits of the plan include: better communication of our intentions; improved awareness of our services and expertise; more effective collaboration with partners and stakeholders; enhanced feedback on beneficiary and customer needs; and extended reach to wider audiences and more people.

The anticipated internal benefits of the plan include: greater financial sustainability; more flexible and innovative projects; better involvement of staff in where the organisation is going; and improved measurement of success and impact.

By 2011 Red Kite Learning will be recognised as one of the leading charities making a real difference to people's lives and to the success of organisations through high quality learning, employment opportunities and capacity building services.

We have defined a number of strategic objectives under the following aims:

- To diversify our sources of income and support.
- To improve the employment and life opportunities of disadvantaged groups through quality information, advice, Skills for Life and vocational training provision.
- To develop and deliver second-tier and capacity building services to organisations in the education, employment and community sectors.
- To make Red Kite Learning a place where people want to work and a recognised brand that stands for value and excellence.

These strategic objectives will underpin our work for the next three years. They have been arrived at through an extensive process of consultation within the management team, staff and trustees. We have defined a plan that reflects our aspirations and provides a set of measurable objectives with which we can evaluate and review our success and impact.

The energy, clarity and alignment generated by the strategic planning process provides a good platform for our continued success and development.

Red Kite Learning is a registered charity and social enterprise that believes in equipping people with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their potential.

We are raising achievement and opportunity for thousands of individuals in London and beyond. We are helping other organisations progress towards shared aims and objectives through clear thinking and coordinated efforts.

The services we currently offer are as follows:

- Information, Advice & Guidance
- Skills for Life
- Vocational Training
- Employer Brokerage
- Recruitment Services
- Web development and e-learning
- Event Management and Networking
- Research and Consultancy

For more information about our services visit www.rkl.org.uk

This Strategic Plan is available for download from our website. It will be included where appropriate with applications and proposals for funding and support. It also intended to be used in the context of partnership development and stakeholder communications.

The rationale for our work

Work is an integral part of most adults' lives. The ability to participate in productive activity contributes significantly to both an individual's physical and psychological well-being. The range of potential negative consequences from being out of work extends far beyond the loss of financial rewards. It often includes loss of role, social contact, daily routine and feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Worklessness is a major problem in London, as the following statistics demonstrate:

- 30% of working age residents are not in employment, more than anywhere else in the United Kingdom.
- One third of working age Londoners does not have a first full level 2 (5 GCSE's or equivalent) qualification – the basic measure of employability.
- Finally, 47% of the London workforce has numeracy skills at Level 1 or below and 25% have literacy skills at Level 1 or below.

Amongst the specific client groups Red Kite Learning supports, that is , ex-offenders and people recovering from a history of substance mis-use, we have found the following:

- Over 50% of people under the supervision of London Probation and of those leaving prison are unemployed.
- 45% of those under the supervision of probation are misusing alcohol or other drugs.

Too many people are being left behind, despite today's environment of high employment and rising skills. Red Kite Learning delivers its services in order to help our beneficiaries realise their potential and lead productive lives. We aim to ensure that our beneficiaries have the skills they need to find and progress in work. Evidence shows that gaining new skills and qualifications can help people improve their lives in a number of ways, for example, better wages, improved employability and progression to further learning.

The ability, skills and support networks to deliver the services needed to equip people to move into employment are many and varied. Individuals, groups and organisations need to have the ability, aptitude and infrastructure to deliver activities which will help people back into work. Our intention is to provide capacity building services to support these individuals, groups and organisations to reach their full potential. We do this in a number of ways: by organising events, providing website and e-learning development services, coordinating networks and partnerships, and supporting individuals through accredited Information, Advice and Guidance qualifications.

The environment

The government has committed itself to the goal of full employment. They have put work at the centre of their reforms. The creation of a single Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has given them the opportunity to achieve this. The emphasis now is on helping people on Incapacity Benefits back into work through the ambitious 'Pathways To Work' programme. The recent awarding of contracts has highlighted the DWP's preference for contracting with large single contractors, usually from the private sector.

The operating environment for charities such as Red Kite Learning delivering public services continues to be broadly favourable. Many government policies seek to expand the voluntary sectors involvement in the delivery of public services, and there is growing recognition of the role that charities can have in transforming public services. Future public services that Red Kite Learning may become more involved in include probation and prison services, employment services, particularly for marginalised groups such as lone parents, substance misusers and people currently claiming Incapacity Benefit.

The implications of this for Red Kite Learning over the next three years are as follows:

- Potential opportunity for increased collaborative working between sectors and providers.
- Increased pressure to demonstrate that our services and projects are efficient and provide value for money for funders.
- Increasingly complex and bureaucratic procurement processes may divert organisational resources.
- Polarisation of the sector with larger charities often better placed to bid for contracts due to economies of scale.
- Intensification and increasing complexity of competition from smaller, bigger and similar sized organisations.
- Pressures on public finances and expansion of the European Union (EU) will squeeze funding.
- Focus on innovation which can lead to better services but can also require the organisation to constantly reinvent already successful services.

An increased role in public service delivery offers many opportunities for Red Kite Learning but also comes with risks such as 'mission drift,' loss of public trust and potential loss of independence.

The questions we need to consider over the next three years include:

- Is public service delivery the best option for the organisation? Are funder-imposed outputs and outcomes compatible with our mission and objects?
- What measures do we need to take to ensure accountability and easy access to information by the public as well as demonstrating what impact our services have?
- How can we ensure a sustainable mix of funding?
- Do our staff have all the necessary skills to take on public service delivery such as managing contracts? Is training available to fill skills gaps?

The government's recent review of the UK's long term skills needs, *Skills in the UK: The Long Term Challenge*, shows that the UK must urgently raise achievements at all levels of skills, and recommends that it commit to becoming a world leader in skills by 2020. This means doubling attainment at most levels of skill. Responsibility for achieving ambitions must be shared between government, employers and individuals.

Aims and Objectives

AIM 1.

To diversify our sources of income and support

Objectives:

- 1.1 To develop a fundraising strategy in support of the business plan.
- 1.2 To make grant applications to Trusts and Foundations for areas of need not addressed by public contracts and to complement our existing provision
- 1.3 To generate fee-based income from our range of services.
- 1.4 To pilot a direct fundraising campaign by means of online donations.
- 1.5 To attract 'social responsibility' donations and support from the corporate sector.
- 1.6 To develop new partnerships with organisations, in London and beyond, whose services complement our own.

AIM 2.

To improve the employment and life opportunities of disadvantaged groups through quality information advice and guidance, skills for life and vocational training provision.

Objectives:

- 2.1 To sustain and expand our Skills for Life (SfL) and Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) services.
- 2.2 To establish an accredited peer mentoring programme and expand our accredited employment skills delivery.
- 2.3 To incorporate ICT qualifications into our delivery.
- 2.4 To embed and/or contextualise SfL, specifically in the areas of Construction, Health, Customer Services and Creative Industries.
- 2.5 To develop our vocational training services, specifically in the areas of Construction, Health, Customer Services and Creative Industries.
- 2.6 To expand our employer brokerage and work placement services.
- 2.7 To develop our learning offer for people in employment.

AIM 3.

To develop and deliver second-tier and capacity building services to organisations in the education, employment and community sectors.

Objectives:

- 3.1** To offer accredited IAG qualifications.
- 3.2** To provide event management services.
- 3.3** To provide website and e-learning development services.
- 3.4** To provide consultancy services where our expertise can be brought to bear.
- 3.5** To coordinate and participate in relevant networks and partnerships.
- 3.6** To develop demand-led learning and development opportunities.

AIM 4.

To make Red Kite Learning a place where people want to work and a recognised brand that stands for value and excellence.

Objectives:

- 4.1** To provide staff with the knowledge and skills to engage with employers, partners and stakeholders more effectively.
- 4.2** To develop a marketing and communication strategy for the organisation.
- 4.3** To establish an internal volunteering programme across Red Kite Learning.
- 4.4** To champion good practice and celebrate the impact of our work.
- 4.5** To develop a competency framework to support our HR and succession planning processes.
- 4.6** To gain an over-arching organisational quality mark.
- 4.7** To review our staff benefits package and continue to invest in staff development.

Objectives will be measured through specific delivery plans that will be developed and owned by each team/department. Measurement of delivery plan performance will inform progress of the strategic plan at senior management level throughout the period.

The Delivery Plan will be used to provide a critical framework for agreeing priorities and resources required to achieve the objectives.