

Devon *Growth Club* Programme

Invitation for Expression of Interest

Seeking: Proactive Schools that want to:

- participate in a NO-COST skills initiative for CPD
- develop stronger relationships with local businesses
- inform their enterprise and careers programmes

Only nine spaces are available for school representatives across Devon (*Excluding Plymouth and Torbay*). If your school is interested in engaging with the programme please submit an expression of interest to Gillian Bishop (Project manager) gillian.bishop@exeter.gov.uk by 8th February 2012.

Skills and Learning

A partnership of Employment and Skills Boards have been successful in achieving funding from Devon County Council to launch a new skills initiative, which will bring together education and business for leadership and management training, using a combination of group learning, networking and individual support.

CPD Most managers would agree that CPD is important for refreshing professional knowledge, boosting productivity and nurturing skills, but in reality it can be difficult finding a training offer which hits the mark without being too rigid in content, too expensive or too much of a time commitment. With this in mind the Growth Club programme aims to offer a more flexible and cost effective approach. We recognise that "the most effective learning takes place when we are faced with real problems to solve" and have placed this philosophy at the heart of the programme.

Action Learning The programme uses the Action Learning training method, which is a highly personalised approach that adapts and evolves to suit the needs and experiences of all members. The approach uses participation driven sessions to reflect on real business issues, explore new approaches and encourage action. Self reflection and evaluation are core to the Action Learning approach and means that participants will already have begun putting new learning into practice by the end of the programme.

Linking Business and Education

"Growth Clubs" will be formed of members from a variety of sectors and industries, helping to foster collaboration and peer mentoring across sectors and building long term professional relationships.

Business Representatives The programme gives small business owner managers operating in Devon the opportunity to join a Growth Club in their local area and make use of over £500 worth of training and business support for the subsidised price of £150. Business participants will gain from learning new methods and approaches which can help improve their business and make their staff more motivated and effective.

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Education Representatives Representatives from schools are offered fully subsidised places in the Growth Club Programme. **The programme will be ideally suited for a member of your senior leadership team who has a passion for enterprise education.** Involvement will establish direct engagement with businesses from the local area, allowing insight into real business issues, challenges and approaches, with the dual benefit of:

- creating a CPD opportunity to develop management and leadership skills and put new learning into action within the education workplace
- helping schools develop more informed teaching programmes about business, enterprise and careers, supported by stronger links to the local business community

Programme Overview

Nine “Growth Clubs” are being set up across Devon (*Excluding Plymouth and Torbay*). The programme will run between March 2012 and November 2012.

Membership Each Growth Club will bring together 8 like-minded individuals from a locality (7 from business, 1 from education) to participate in Action Learning sessions. Sessions are spaced 4-6 weeks apart, which enables enough time for new approaches to be reflected upon or trialled and then for experiences to be shared and challenged in groups.

Facilitation Members will be guided through the process by a skilled Action Learning Facilitator. To support individual development the programme also includes one-to-one time with the Facilitator, who will provide coaching, mentoring and support to help all members translate new learning into action and improvement within their organisation.

Sustainability After the programme of 6 sessions is complete each Growth Club will be given the option of continuing to meet as a group, either with or without their Facilitator. Action Learning groups frequently choose to continue meeting after their initial programme ends, often forming independent, self sustaining peer support networks. The programme will also include an assessment of its outcomes and the learning legacy will be shared with partners and stakeholders.

About the Project Team

This is a joint partnership project delivered by Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board and North Devon Employment and Skills Board, and supported by Devon County Council. The partnership is committed to providing quality training and development opportunities, with the aims of fostering business growth and strengthening business and education links across the Devon area. For more information about the partnership or its individual partners please contact Gillian Bishop (Project Manager) Gillian.bishop@exeter.gov.uk

