



2005 - 2006

annual LEEDS ACCOMMODATION FORUM report

16 - 20 Munro House
Duke Street
Leeds LS9 8AG
www.LAFonline.org
0113 244 4221



Paul Belbin - LAF Chair

During 2006, LAF has become established in its new home at Munro House: the improved facilities and central location have proved popular with members. Being opposite Leeds Bus Station has meant that city centre parking has not been the issue we worried it might: in fact LAF's green credentials have been enhanced as so many delegates have chosen

to come to training courses by public transport. The prospect of passing Harry Graton from Look North on your way in is quite a draw too!

The core of LAF's purpose is to add value and quality to the services that member organisations provide to vulnerable and excluded groups. As ever, Dave Mason has ensured that the LAF training programme is up-to-date with best practice and guidance on the emerging issues within the sector - which is why demand for LAF courses remains high, despite the financial pressures many agencies are facing.

Sarah Davies has made sure that members receive relevant and reliable information through LAF's revamped magazine, website, and monthly e-briefings. Sarah has introduced a series of lively networking events, bringing members together informally over lunch to share news and ideas.

Communications have also been at the heart of LAF's development as a Social Enterprise. Particularly as a facilitator for partnership working, such as the Leeds Housing Benefit and Supporting People Provider Forums. This experience enabled LAF to win a contract to develop a database and website, and organise a highly successful event for a new regional network of homelessness organisations, called Housing Action Yorkshire & Humberside (HAYH).

As LAF's ambition is take on more such opportunities, so new skills are needed. Miriam Scott, Webmaster, is not a title we would have recognised 12 months ago, but the team (ably supported by Sue Cox) has shown great flexibility in responding to fresh challenges.

So many thanks to Miriam, Dave, Sarah and Sue. And thanks to all of LAF's members and trustees, particularly to Sheila Saunders who left the Board towards the end of 2005 after three years as Chair, during which LAF put in place many of the policies and tools required to be a successful small business.

Also, welcome to Brenda Francis, Rosemarie Harris (not pictured), Jay Jones, Carol White and Lisa Huntley who have all joined us as Trustees during 2006.

'As LAF's ambition is take on more of such opportunities, so new skills are needed... but the team has shown great flexibility in responding to fresh challenges.'



Janet Spencer
LAF Vice-Chair



Lisa Huntley
LAF Trustee



Brenda Francis
LAF Trustee



Jay Jones
LAF Trustee



Sharon Allen
LAF Trustee



Carol White
LAF Trustee

LAF - a thriving Social Enterprise



Miriam Scott
Project Director

Two years ago we were a long established voluntary sector organisation (twenty years and counting) with an excellent record for earning money through providing quality training. Then we heard the words "social enterprise". The benefits of self-sufficiency were obvious. There was independence, flexibility, a responsive service, and a chance to express our values in the way we conducted our business...

How do things look now a year and a half in? Because it takes several months to produce fully audited accounts (copies of the full financial statements are available from the LAF office) we're really reporting on a bit more than the first year of trading.

April 05 saw our move to city centre premises with on-site training room – a risk that we just had to take, and one that is now (end November 06) starting to pay off.

However, with the increased costs of our move, and changes in our customer base (Supporting People has had all sorts of effects) the first year of the social enterprise has not been plain sailing.

At the end of 04/05 we had a small but healthy surplus; at the end of 05/06 we had a deficit – we had to spend 19.4% of our reserves. The good news was that after several good years our reserves were in a healthy state. And the training team have been working so hard on promoting our excellent courses that we are now on budget for income from public training – thanks to our customers for your support!

But we need more income streams and we are now working on different ways of generating income. We are preparing a new business plan for the period 07/09 - it will have a strong emphasis on improving our business performance substantially over the next two years. At the same time we are going to start working on becoming a regional service provider. Meanwhile we're going to maintain the quality training and communications services for which we are well known. It's an exciting project – watch this space!

LAF Training Survey 2006

The training courses that LAF offers are strongly based on the findings of the training surveys that we send out to our members. The latest survey was conducted earlier this year and yielded some interesting results, which are now being used in the planning of future courses.

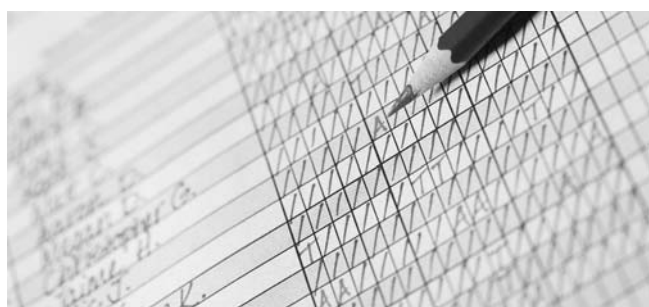
The purpose of the 2006 survey was to find out if the original findings of the 2000 survey were still valid and to discover if there were any areas with regards to the training that LAF needed to develop. What we discovered was that the 'Welfare Benefits' course was ranked lower than it had been in 2000, whilst 'Working with Self-Harm' and 'Professional Boundaries' were both new additions to the list of most popular training courses. The findings also showed that there was a much greater emphasis on dealing with drug usage and its implications for supported housing staff.

Our expanded Keyworking courses did well, with 'Introduction to Keyworking' and 'Keyworking Difficult and Reluctant Clients'

both scoring highly in the survey. The survey also revealed that our participants are far more solution focused when choosing courses than career focused. They tend to concentrate on courses that will help them work more effectively with their clients in "adversarial" situations, rather than for personal development and advancement.

The development of new agencies to help with benefit and housing benefit queries has meant that housing support workers do not need to have as detailed a knowledge as before, and so consequently these causes are no longer appearing in our most popular course lists.

We also discovered that approximately 80% of our member organisations now have a training officer, compared to the 15% who had someone in post when we conducted the survey in 2000. We learnt that around 60% of organisations have a self-generated programme of training, which shows a much more business-like attitude than we saw in 2000.



Significantly, more of the participants are now aware of the detailed course content before they arrive on a course - the review of the LAF training publicity material in the light of the 2000 results and the addition of the training component to the website, has played a part in this. The result of the research has been to refine the course offerings for 2007 to create a rolling programme which will deliver courses on topics and at intervals which are most suitable and beneficial to the sector.

Training - a look back at the year

The training programme continued to expand during 2005/6, and numbers were up on the previous year with regards to the number of public training courses that were run (103 compared to 89 in 2004 -5).

Unsurprisingly, participant numbers were also up, with 942 participants attending public courses this year, compared to 828 last year. We did see a decrease in the number of in-house courses that ran this year compared to last year (49 down from 62), however, the actual decrease in participants on in-house courses was limited (624 down from 656). This suggests that organisations are having a better overview of their training needs and focusing their training more selectively to benefit the greatest numbers of workers. There is also evidence that many organisations are now using their own in-house trainers.

During the year many courses were overhauled and some new courses were added. Many of these proved popular, especially the courses on the Supporting People QAF, both for basic explanation and implementation of evidence collection. Another new course, "Working with Cannabis" was also created following a national conference on the topic, and has proved so popular that the course has been repeated.

We have continued the work with the Leeds Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy and this has meant that almost 200 housing support workers have now been trained free of charge on

Building Self-Esteem in young people. Other developments include an innovation that was included in the new LAF website, which has given us the ability to send emails to a number of individuals letting them know about courses they might be interested in and allowing them to book online.

Looking forward, the results of the training survey have been fed into the 2007 training plan and this should provide the sector with training that has been targeted at their expressed needs. Also a new system for tracking participants who cannot attend a course for whatever reason, allows them to be given pre-reserved places on the next available course and the opportunity shortly before the course to confirm their attendance. Thus, it is more difficult for workers to miss out on the training they have expressed an interest in.

Finally, the LAF Training Team continues to extend its gratitude and admiration to our select band of trainers whose talent, commitment and hard work help to ensure our success.



Training delegates 2006

Third party working

HAYH - Having successfully pitched for the HAYH project, Miriam oversaw the implementation & launch of HAYH. This work included compiling databases of prospective members, creating a website for the new organisation, arranging a large & very impressive launch event and producing various communications such as website copy & articles for other publications. The HAYH contracted came to an end in September.

SPPF - The Supporting People Providers' Forum has continued with great success during the last year. SPPF meetings are well attended and we have had a variety of guest speakers as well. Sarah ran the elections for the CSDG reps, as their two year

tenure came to an end in November. All existing reps were re-elected, with the exception of the BME rep who decided not to re-stand. A new rep was elected into that post.

The forum website was also given some much need attention this year, most notably with the weekly updating of the news section & the introduction of a news flash to alert visitors of important news & documents. Our thanks are once again extended to the Leeds Supporting People team for all their financial and practical support.

Housing Benefit - LAF no longer provide administration support in writing the minutes, but we do provide the use of our training room and Miriam still attends the meetings.

Team update



'Miriam Scott, Dave Mason, Susan Cox and Sarah Davies.'

Miriam has been busy this year with the implementation & launch of HAYH. In addition, she has written various funding applications which will hopefully equate to some additional income next year. Dave has continued to work miracles with the training & has effected an increase in the number of public courses that have run this year. Sarah has implemented a new look website, set up a monthly e-newsletter and produced the quarterly magazine. She also introduced quarterly networking sessions which have proved so popular that it is standing room only! Susan has introduced an accounting programme to track the performance of the training courses and is providing monthly reports to advise on the progress towards budget.



David Jorysz
LAF Treasurer

2005/06 continued LAF's transition to a social enterprise. We no longer have substantial charitable grants: our income is predominantly either self-generated through membership and training charges or through contracted pieces of work.

We are grateful for the assistance provided by West Yorkshire Social Enterprise Link in helping with this change and our ongoing planning.

LAF's move to larger premises with a training suite led to a change in the cost structure: our premises costs are higher but the direct costs of providing training, which previously included room hire, are now lower.

The result for the year was a deficit of £14.7k, which was funded from reserves. This deficit was caused by the changes and a slight reduction in training income.

LAF however, remains in good shape to face the future, with an ever more entrepreneurial approach to

meeting the challenges of providing services for the benefit of our members and, through them, those in need of housing with support.

**LAF DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2006**

INCOME	Community Fund	Core LAF	TOTAL 2006	TOTAL 2005
Leeds City Council	0	6,310	6,310	6,310
Membership Fees & Subscriptions	0	11,308	11,308	14,456
Fees LAF Training Courses	0	96,363	96,363	104,760
Community Fund		838	838	18,277
Project Income	0	12,000	12,000	13,530
Other Grants	10,200	0	10,200	3,627
Investment Income	0	572	572	584
Sales of Publications		1,798	1,798	
Miscellaneous Income		300	300	
Bad Debt Recovery		516	516	
Total	10,200	130,005	140,205	161,544
EXPENDITURE			2006	2005
DIRECT PROJECT COSTS				
Salaries, Employers NI & Pension costs	9,000	6,645	15,645	25,797
Photocopying & Printing	0	3,874	3,874	1,664
Stationery & Postage	0	4,145	4,145	5,665
Website Costs	0	838	838	456
Consultancy & Staff Recruitment Costs	1,200	1,298	2,498	1,200
Sundries	0	0	0	84
Publication of Literature	0	0	0	2,135
Depreciation	0	1,185	1,185	1,252
Sub Total	10,200	17,985	28,185	38,253
COST OF TRAINING	0	41,920	41,920	50,518
MANAGEMENT & ADM				
Salaries, Employers NI & Pension costs	0	58,008	58,008	53,562
Subscriptions	0	401	401	481
Staff Travel	0	347	347	607
Staff Training	0	149	149	734
Audit	0	1,058	1,058	940
Computer Software	0	181	181	1,161
Legal & Professional	0	74	74	863
Moving Office Costs	0	2,213	2,213	0
Rent & Rates	0	16,011	16,011	2,258
Bad debts	0	0	0	947
AGM & Annual Reports	0	929	929	1,053
Insurance	0	324	324	376
Repairs & Renewals	0	117	117	705
Office Cleaning	0	2,609	2,609	0
Light & Heat	0	1,219	1,219	227
Telephone	0	1,190	1,190	719
Sub Total	0	84,830	84,830	64,633
Total Costs	10,200	144,735	154,935	153,404
Surplus / Deficit	0	14,730	14,730	8,140

LAF however, remains in good shape to face the future, with an ever more entrepreneurial approach to