

Choosing a Training Provider for your Organisation

Incared Services was formed in 1991, in those days there were few independent training providers, one had to approach the local hospitals or contact colleagues in the sector. *P.R.E.P* had just been introduced and registered nurses were looking for appropriate training to maintain their registration status.

Since the Care standards Act in 2000 introduced *TOPSS* who subsequently created the first national structured induction and foundation standards for care staff, there has been a steady increase in small companies and individuals who felt care training was an easy market. With so many training providers for you to choose from, how do you go about deciding which ones offer what you and your organisation needs?

Step 1: Talk to them

It is well worth the investment of spending time discussing with the prospective training provider what they offer. You will want to make sure that they understand the needs of the care sector, its employees and how to work with adult learners in the workplace environment.

Key questions to ask:

- **Do they come from a care background?**
- **Are they Health and safety people that are branching into care?**
- **How long have they been established?**
- **What experience do they have in care?**

How is their programme delivered?

- Is it college, centre or workplace based?
- Do they offer a wide range of group sessions on underpinning knowledge for care support workers?
- Do they offer other training options where there are insufficient numbers for group training to make it cost effective?
- Do they use distance learning packages, either I.C.T. (Information Communication Technology) or workbook based?
- What do the training providers actually provide? Is their range diverse enough or will you have to spend all your time looking for the other providers, where they cannot provide the training?
- Who are the tutors for any taught aspects and what is their experience or qualifications?
- **Very important:** what are their terms of cancellation or postponement? Are they less than 3 days?
- Find out who will be the liaison in the company if or when you are not satisfied with any part of the service you are receiving, then get to know them. Could you work with them? Will they listen to you?

Flexible ways of delivering a programme means that the needs of your organisation can be met more easily and can save you money and time.

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On this theme also ask:

- Are they prepared to negotiate to meet the needs of the employer or learner?
- How will progress be monitored to flag problems or encourage achievement?
- What are the timescales for the programme/s?
- Who will be delivering the programme?

Similarly, who are the organisation team and what is their experience? You want to be sure that tutors and administrative team understand your type of setting and the kind of work your learners are or will be doing.

About the training itself:

- How was your training needs assessment done?
 - Will you have to shop around for training they don't cover?
 - Do they have a standardised set of handouts and workplace assignments?
 - Do they remind you with a courtesy call when your training is due?
 - What systems do they have in place to monitor their quality?
 - How do they ensure quality? - What kind of feedback or grading do they use to monitor both the trainers and the learners?
- Do they offer workplace assignments?

It is helpful to get an idea of how outside experts view the quality of the programme. Are they accredited or attached to any awarding bodies?

POST training:

Are there any extra costs?

If you scan certificates, do they offer electronic versions to save you time?

Do they offer to manage your matrix?

Do they offer cloud based access to your training files from your smart phone, pc or tablet?

Do they offer PDP support?

Do they offer a single appointed person for these services, or do you have to spend ages on the phones pressing 1, 2 or 3 and never getting hold of the same person?

Can portfolios be submitted electronically or is there a lot of

Paper work? The amount of paperwork involved can be very off putting to learners. You should be looking for systems that are not overly complicated.

• How much will it cost and how is payment organised?

Is it payable in stages or is it all up-front? Many training providers require payment to be made upfront. This may or may not be negotiable with some training providers willing to accept stage payments.

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Step 2: Ask for the names of at least two references

Ask to be put in touch with organisations similar to your own that have had staff on that particular training programme. Contact these organisations and ask them how well they felt that the training provided met their needs. You might also like to ask what, if any, issues or problems arose, how they were resolved. Most importantly, ask if they would use that training provider again.

Step 3: Draw up a list of your requirements

Think about what training you are likely to need in the next twelve months. Send this information to the training provider you think will best meet your needs. Ask for a written statement of what they could offer, when they could offer it, what contribution you would be expected to make (for example, by providing in-house group training or releasing staff for centre-based learning) and what it would cost per learner.

Step 4: Consider their response and negotiate

If the training provider insists on something that you disagree with and you think it is very important, then look for a different training provider. For example, if the training provider says that training must have at least 5 days notice for cancellation, as does not offer flexible options on postponement, then look for another provider.

Step 5: Signing the contract/written agreement

Once you are satisfied with what is being offered, sign the contract or written agreement with the training provider specifying all the relevant details of what has been agreed between you. The agreement should ideally last twelve months and you should have the option to pay a twelfth of the cost each month to help with budgeting.

More questions?

Call : 0208 144 9491