

## Skills for Life?

What are the signs?

### 1. Action observed.

- Forms aren't filled in correctly
- Staff don't understand timesheets or payslips
- Written information is ignored
- People take written information home to look at.
- Mistakes are made during the stock-taking process.
- System change leads to a person becoming withdrawn, avoiding you or colleagues, or specific tasks, or hand in their notice.
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### 2. Behaviour and Attitude.

- Don't care attitude
- People say that paperwork isn't important.
- Can't be bothered.
- Motivation.
- Time issues are blamed. (Context.)
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### 3. Verbal Request.

- An individual approaches you about themselves or a colleague.
- Complaints are made about colleagues.
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## Who checks?

Assessment can be formal or informal. We often informally assess ourselves and colleagues abilities and skills subconsciously all the time.

1. Informal assessment. Share a newspaper article while you're on a coffee break. Go through time sheets together or stock taking paperwork or order books. Ask questions to check reading as well as concept. ("What's the fourth column for?" Then find out if they know how it relates to the total amount.)

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### 2. Formal Assessment.

- Training Department
- ABS Unit
- Local College

## How do you deal with the situation?

What do you do when you identify SfL issues or training needs?

1. *Be appropriate!* What works for you and one individual might not work for you and another. Think about how **you** would like to be approached, what you know about the individual and their learning style, and the time and places that are available to you.
2. How can you find out what's going on for that individual?
  - Appraisal
  - Supervision
  - Close working relationships
  - Good communication between staff at all levels
  - Make yourself available ... which is different to ... Open door policy
3. Try a group approach, so that you're not singling people out. Make information about training and support available to everyone, but maintain confidentiality. (i.e. Use notice boards or enclose information with pay slips.)
4. *Use positive language.* Give specific positive feedback.  
I/the team/the place of work really appreciates/has noticed the way you ... (whatever they do well or put lots of effort into) ... and I think that we can increase your production levels/commitment to the team/hours/whatever by attending some training/considering a course/observing X. etc.

Ask: "What's your experience of this?" Or "How do you see this situation improving?" Or "What do you think might be a way of addressing X?"

Then say "That's a very valid/useful point. AND ..." (Not but.)

**REMEMBER** that **you** know that by raising skill levels individuals will feel more confident and motivated. (And efficiency and communication will improve in your workplace.) At this stage **you** know that but **they** might feel scared and vulnerable!

## What next?

What can you offer people?

The chance to observe or shadow colleagues.

The chance to be observed or shadowed.

Mentoring.

Supervision.

### AND/OR

#### 1. Training Department. (And Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders.)

- Can access extra funding for people with dyslexia.
- Can request a Training Needs Analysis.
- Can give the individual an assessment for them to take home and complete.
- Can give an individual options. (See below.)

#### 2. ABS Centre. (Blackbird Leys)

See leaflets. It's free, and offers morning, afternoon and evening sessions. The centre is flexible and friendly.

ABS Centre. (Union Street)

As above.

#### Community Centres

(Contact Grace or Jo.)

Literacy, numeracy and IT sessions are held in Community centres and schools across the county. Times vary. The tutors are sensitive and sympathetic!

#### 3. Basic Skills at Work Team.

(Contact Grace or Jo.)

A Training Needs Analysis might be conducted initially. Training is then set up in-house, with the emphasis on supporting people to meet the requirements of their job. It's very focussed on specific needs.

#### 4. Local College.

Oxford College and Abingdon & Witney are both large colleges with many courses.

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