

## **January 2012 project update: Supporting Employers with the Workforce Implications of Assistive Technologies**

### **Background**

The aim of this project is to develop a suite of knowledge and skill sets with accompanying Workforce Learning Strategy to address the range of functions needed by the workers who support people's well-being and independence in communities through assistive technologies across the UK. These will be informed by desk based research and an employer survey undertaken earlier this year, both of which contribute to our knowledge and understanding of Assistive Technology (AT), how it is currently used and how this impacts on the workforce.

For the purpose of this project AT is understood as encompassing electronic aids and systems from call alarm services through systems for monitoring the environment or individual well-being, and right on to internet and mobile 'smart phone' technologies.

### **Ongoing activity**

We have been **recruiting Champions** to help shape the work over the next 18 months. The Champions will inform the development of the products and will have a role in raising awareness of assistive technology and the work of the project. We welcome a broad range of perspectives including those who manage and deliver Assistive Technology services, social care providers, commissioners, training managers & training providers within the public, independent and third sector. We welcome the input from our housing and health colleagues too as we progress this work.

Your contribution to the project to date is appreciated and we do hope that you will continue to share your knowledge and expertise. Many of you have already contributed by completing the employer survey earlier in the year, providing feedback to some key questions circulated in the autumn and shared information.

### **Next Steps**

We will be seeking your expertise to refine the Workforce Learning Strategy and Knowledge and Skills Sets as they are being drafted. As an AT Champion you will have the opportunity to study the draft documents and to provide feedback to inform and shape their development.

The drafts will be circulated to our networks of Champions across the UK at the beginning of February for consideration. Recognising that it will be only a 2 week opportunity for comments at this stage, we hope that having advance notice will be helpful.

<b>5 February 2013</b>	DRAFT Knowledge and Skills Sets for Assistive Technology to be circulated to Engagement Leads & Champions
<b>8 February 2013</b>	DRAFT Workforce Learning Strategy for Assistive Technology to be circulated to Engagement Leads & Champions
<b>5 – 25 Feb 2013</b>	Champions to study drafts and provide feedback via Engagement leads
<b>25 February 2013</b>	Final date for Champions feedback on initial drafts
<b>25 February - 11 March 2013</b>	Amendments and revisions to the Workforce Learning Strategy and Knowledge and Skills Sets for Assistive Technology in light of feedback received
<b>19 March 2013</b>	UK Project Board to approve version for wider sector consultation
<b>2013 - 2014</b>	Wider consultation through discussion forums, online consultations etc. To ensure robust testing and consultation on workforce learning strategy and knowledge and skills sets ensuring they meet employer and workforce needs across the UK to support the effective delivery of Assistive Technology

You will receive the initial drafts for comments on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> February. Please take time to consider and share your expertise to inform and shape this important work.

For further information please contact.....

### **Raising awareness of AT – can you help?**

The project is also in the fortunate position of being able to support the design and development of one or more innovative resources relating to AT. This resource will aim to help Champions raise awareness in the sector about AT in general and about the project's learning strategy/knowledge and skills sets in particular. It could be a case study about how AT is making a difference in someone's life, or about how AT can improve the way services are designed and delivered. It might well be both an illustration and a learning resource. We expect the resource will itself make use of modern technologies in its design.

**Could you work with us** to identify what the resource should be and to make sure it's as valuable and useful for Champions as possible? We are currently setting up a small UK-wide working group of Champions to guide the development of the new resource. The group will usually operate virtually but there may be occasional meetings.

**This is a great opportunity** to tell us how we can support you in your enthusiasm for AT! To get involved or just to find out more, contact ..... We look forward to working with you!