

inhouse

For members and employees of New Forest District Council

Learning to manage

Communication is the key to good management, says Grainne Suter, one of the experts devising and running the pilot management development courses for NFDC employees.

Grainne, a director of Midas Training Solutions, helped to run two of the six month management development courses last year. She is enthusiastic about the quality of the work achieved on the courses and the way that managers who attended them have applied their new skills back in the workplace.

"Everyone was a joy to work with," she said. "The attendance rate was fantastic and they all seemed to absorb knowledge like sponges.

"Our feedback shows that most have put what they learnt into practice."

Grainne worked with personnel services to run development programmes for senior, middle and supervisory managers.

Three project teams developed the course, taking into account employee needs.

Grainne concentrated on developing effective communication skills.

"Good communication is vital," she said. "Problems are caused when managers and their teams don't communicate or when departments fail to talk to each other."

Confidence-building exercises followed, including sessions where people were able to admit to their weaknesses and build on their strengths. Techniques for dealing with aggressive or passive behaviour were taught.

"Being able to confront those sort of problems in a safe environment makes people feel much more relaxed about it," said Grainne.

Other areas covered included making presentations and looking at equal opportunities.

"We also looked at stress and time management," said Grainne. "Managing is a major role in itself, so the people in charge need to be able to manage themselves as well as their teams.

"Excellent managers are those who are aware of the



Good communication - Grainne Suter with Jayne Griffiths

impact they have on the people working with them."

Grainne and Jayne Griffiths spoke of an unexpected spin-off from the courses.

"The courses were not only about what you can learn on them but they were also an opportunity to share experiences," said Jayne.

"So many people said they had forged strong friendships through sharing the experience."

"Because people were sharing confidences about their own experiences, they

had to learn to trust each other," confirmed Grainne. "This went across the board and people from different departments formed good relationships. This of course has meant that those departments work better together."

The external trainers are working with Jayne and Manjit to offer similar programmes this year.

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