

This short article is to let you know a little more about the JIVE consortium who have just won the contract to deliver the UK National Resource Centre for Women in SET.

The centre will be based in Bradford, with guidance and information accessible from anywhere in the UK through a new website (aimed to be up and running by the beginning of February) and a telephone help-line. The Resource Centre will map and draw on existing initiatives, and share the good practice that is happening in the various parts of SET, whilst tackling the major longstanding issues for women in SET with employers, careers professionals and academia.

The centre will develop incrementally as resources are increased and functions up and running. However, while developing the centre, there are substantial activities already happening under the JIVE Partnership (out of which the JIVE consortium developed). This is already a national (and international) partnership of eleven organisations with hubs in London, South East and Wales as well as in Yorkshire and Humberside. JIVE have been selected to represent the UK at the EC as a model partnership for tackling occupational segregation and the gender pay gap.

JIVE grew out of Let's TWIST who initiated awareness raising CPD training for FE and HE lecturers on strategies to increase and retain women on engineering, construction and technology courses.

JIVE partners is already delivering some of the objectives identified for the Resource Centre in engineering, construction and technology.

Examples of what we are doing already include

- a national mentoring scheme - the largest for women in SET cutting across sectors and levels, from schoolgirls, apprentices, further and higher education and women in professional employment
- national CPD training for the whole range of learning providers, careers professionals and employers delivered by a pool of national Let's TWIST trainers
- working with the ECITB to increase recruitment and retention of women into this highly segregated sector of industry.
- working with SET employers who want to improve their recruitment and retention of female employees
- offering ICT technical skills training to women to advance their career prospects.

JIVE partners drew together a range of partners from women in the sectors from craft, technician, professional and academic background along with their FE and HE institutions, the women's training network, two sector skills councils and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

We are well aware that there are many women's organisations that have been working for many years delivering a support network for women in SET and trying to promote SET careers across the range of levels and sub-sectors within SET.

What we want to do now is to support and build on the networks that already exist and help to fill gaps that are identified, rather than to duplicate or replicate what is already there.

Annette Williams, who is leading the Centre, along with some of the team will be attending the BITC "SET To Make a Difference" conference on 11th February in Manchester, but our first main event is an invitation to all women's organisations in SET to come and meet us on Thursday, 26th February 2004 in London. This pre-launch seminar will enable all interested parties to hear about the JIVE plan for the Centre, but more importantly it will allow interested parties to be involved from the start in discussions about needs, concerns and priorities.