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## **The DfES National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance - NPSL- BA**

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*If the NPSLBA training programme has not reached your area yet, it is likely to, as it is rolled out from January 2006 across England (and extended to SEBD schools). This large national initiative is to be welcomed, although its shape and form may not suit everybody. It is a largely self-help and 'DIY' model of training, using as a framework, training units (some very good!) from a menu supplied by DfES on a CD or downloaded from their web-site. Local authorities form clusters of about ten people, from a range of job, who attend self-led twilight sessions using supplied material. In between the twilights there are 'inter-sessional activities'. There are also three core full training days. The training links to Level 3 and 4 (later possibly Master's) accreditation by City and Guilds. The approach is novel and, at present at least, backed to an extent by government funding. Judging from the May conference at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton, for LA officers, it is being enthusiastically received by many pilot clusters (see below). Each region is supported by a NPSLBA co-ordinator.*

*How the training will sit alongside established mainly distance education courses remains to be seen. The research by a Sheffield Hallam University team, which informed the NPSLBA programme, failed to identify some well-known existing courses. The existing courses are targeted clearly at those who work with children with SEBD - rather than at 'leaders' in the 'Behaviour and Attendance' field. In the traditional courses, such as the University of Birmingham PG Diploma/ Master's or the SEBDA/University of Leicester master's level certificate, students are supported by tutors with long experience in SEBD.*

*Another important aspect is the planned NPSLBA Exchange which hopes to be an effective forum regionally and nationally for the exchange of knowledge and dissemination of good practice, by meetings and e-communication.*

*We in SEBDA, will assist as we can, in making the NPSLBA programme a success. I have been asked to join the NPSLBA national reference group. We shall be seeking a close alignment between our courses and the DfES NPSLBA courses, allowing easy transferability of credits. It would be a waste if ours and the experience of other university courses tend to be sidelined while the spotlight is on the NPSLBA programme. We hope that there can be cross-fertilization and symbiosis of good practice and a fair sharing of resources made available. Watch this space...*

The official description of what the NPSLBA programme is about is given below:

### **'Overview**

The NPSL- BA is designed to promote leadership training in behaviour and attendance (B&A). The programme offers qualifications and creates career pathways

for the growing number of specialists who work in the field of B&A. Not all of these professionals are teachers. They work in varied settings: in mainstream or special schools or units; in primary or secondary schools and as LEA officers. All have a leadership role in B&A as part of their work or they aspire to become such leaders.

The aims of the NPSLBA Programme are to:

- raise the professional status of staff with specialist skills in B&A;
- identify career paths and encourage more staff to follow a career in B&A;
- extend the leadership skills of all these staff;
- develop high level training programmes with progression between levels;
- establish B & A standards and a sequence of qualifications;
- create and maintain a national network for all who work in B&A improvement;
- promote Lead Behaviour Professional (LBP) and similar school leadership roles.

It is run by a central team within the Improving Behaviour and Attendance Division of the DfES, coordinating a specialist leader training network via the nine Government regions. In each region, a Regional Coordinator facilitates self-tutored cluster groups of B&A professionals who come together to follow the 12 month programme using national training materials. 80% of the programme is employment based learning making improvements to behaviour and attendance in the workplace.

On completion of the programme, cluster group members are accredited at level 3 or 4 of the National Qualifications Framework or Masters level. Qualifications are based on learning outcomes which are congruent with national occupational standards.

NPSL-BA is available in pilot form until September 2005 when it will roll out nationally, training a minimum of 3,500 B&A professionals per year. Because it is very cost and time effective, the programme is attractive to a wide range of staff in settings other than schools and this is increasingly the case with the developing leadership roles of staff involved in leading multi agency teams and the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

### ***An organisation for all behaviour and attendance workers***

In addition, the NPSL-BA Regional Coordinators are organising networks of behaviour and attendance professionals that will link together nationally to create a vibrant and dynamic professional community. A regionally based national organisation will support:

- existing local provision;
- face to face meetings locally and in regions;
- communication through on-line communities;
- sharing ideas and developing good practice;
- professional development opportunities;
- specialist B&A leader status.

The HQ of NPSLBA is: Improving Behaviour and Attendance Division, Reading Office  
The University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Woodlands Avenue, Reading  
RG6 1HY Tel: 0118 378 6825 *[now under Capita - from 2006]*