**Buddying a new employee**

**What was the workplace issue?**

Most companies find that new employees take some time to learn how to interact effectively with specific company processes and equipment, but it often takes some time to realise that there could be an issue with low level foundation skills.

**What was the impact of the issue on the workplace?**

Sometimes, new workers were very slow to learn the tasks necessary of their job role, which slowed production and created potential safety issues.

**What was the foundation skills gap?**

The foundation skills gap could be one of several – reading, writing, oral communication or numeracy, or, it could be about general confidence to demonstrate any of these skills. This scenario sets the scene for identifying if there are any issues that need to be addressed.

**What was a possible solution?**

One company put a buddying system in place for all new employees.

*“We know that some of our employees have some issues with the reading and writing tasks that they need to, to do their jobs. When people start work for us we team them up with a more experienced worker as buddy to give assistance wherever it’s required. We talk to the buddies about recognising low level reading and writing skills, and we also talk to them about the things that they can do to assist someone that they’re buddied up with – simple things like explaining how to enter data into the vehicle management system, or helping out with using the menu on the intranet. It works well for us... most people manage to get up to a level to function effectively, and if not, they feel comfortable enough to come to us and talk about it,”* said the manager.

**How did the solution change practices?**

The solution not only ensures that new workers feel supported to develop the skills needed to work effectively, but it also helps to identify if workers need training to increase their skill levels.

*‘We try not to make a big deal about low literacy skills – just try and create an environment where people support each other where it’s needed. Sometimes that leads onto people wanting to do something about improving their reading and writing, so that’s good.’*

**Resources**

Buddying guidelines