



## CASE STUDY

### Team Development - Wiltshire County Council Central SEN Services – April 2007

The Central SEN Services Unit at Wiltshire County Council is responsible for identifying and assessing children who have special educational needs and providing appropriate provision for their education. The team employs over 25 staff including Education Officers, Assistant Education Officers, Administrative Officers and support staff. Like many local authorities, the team's current situation was the result of a number of recent changes:

- A recent department restructure
- Staff roles developing beyond previous boundaries
- A combination of new and long serving team members creating diversity in ideas and experience
- Increasing council emphasis on efficiency and best value
- The need to develop services in response to Central Government guidance and White Papers

The management team recognised the need to tackle these issues and help the team move forward, but felt that working off site with external facilitators would bring a fresh and objective perspective. Having identified one day in the calendar with maximum staff availability, Team Manager Kaye Beeson contacted The Pathways Group.

'We were delighted to hear from Kaye' says Pathways Director Chris Malpass 'and we recognised lots of themes from working with other authorities'. Chris and fellow director Paul Bedwell joined the management team at a planning meeting to agree an outline for the day. 'Our preparation timescale was tight' says Paul 'but we were happy to take up the challenge.'

The meeting identified key issues and allowed the Pathways team to challenge and clarify priorities. From this, the day's objectives became:

- Celebrate success to date
- Clarify the team's future direction
- Re-energise team spirit
- Help empower team members to move forward

The development day was held at the Center Parcs Conference Centre at Longleat, providing a combination of classroom and outdoor facilities that were incorporated into the programme. Pathways designed a series of interactive sessions involving all team members, whilst sharing information on how to develop effective and empowered teams. The team completed self-assessments to clarify their strengths and areas for development, and Pathways led action-planning work to help the team continue to make progress after the event, backed up by further tools for future use.

As the day ended, Kaye Beeson said 'I've been consistently impressed with the Pathways approach. They made sure they really understood the issues, were never fazed by our last minute ideas and worked really hard before and during the event to give us the best outcome on the day. We're pleased we chose to use them.'

*Pathways helps organisations and their people change, adapt, learn, develop, innovate and succeed. For more information, visit [www.pathwaysgroup.co.uk](http://www.pathwaysgroup.co.uk) or call Paul Bedwell (07711 636568) or Chris Malpass (07791 128110)*

