

£1m funding for research into coaching effectiveness

More than £1m has been allocated by the government for research into the effectiveness of coaching for women working in the logistics sector.

Skills for Logistics – the Sector Skills Council for the freight logistics industries – has been given £1.2 m by the Department for Education and Skills to spend 18 months investigating how coaching and mentoring can be used to help women achieve more work.

The researchers will also look at ways of getting more women to become lorry drivers and improving the career prospects of women working in warehouses.

Skills for Logistics director of marketing and communications, Lucinda Ward, told TJ that the research would include ‘exploring the options’ of the different kinds of coaching available. ‘Whether the coaching would be done internally, within the women’s own companies, or externally needs to be explored more fully. Telephone coaching could also be an option.’ She said.

The benefits of mentoring were less certain, she added. ‘I don’t think it always works very well.

Where it’s been most effective, I think, is where a woman has had access to someone within the same industry who isn’t her boss. I think it helps if you can sound off your ideas to someone who doesn’t necessarily have an interest in the company.’

This was the first time that such research had been undertaken in the logistics industry, although similar projects had been carried out in other industries.

‘Women in the [logistics] industry will welcome it,’ said Ward.

Skills for Logistics recently held its second Women in Transport event, in conjunction with the Freight Transport Association, at which mentoring and career progression were discussed. ‘A wide range of women came to the event,’ said Ward, ‘and they are genuinely interested in coaching and mentoring – they feel it could really make a difference’.

‘I’m very pleased to receive the funding – we’re not a big organisation so it’s a nice endorsement.’