

## **West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network**

### **Director's Report**

#### **1. Celebration Event**

- 1.1. The second annual WYLLN Celebration Event took place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June at Leeds Civic Hall. This was another successful event with very positive feedback from attendees. Peter Roberts, the Principal and Chief Executive of the new Leeds City College, was this year's keynote speaker and was well received. The event was also an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the last 12 months of WYLLN since the last Celebration Event.
- 1.2. The event was attended by 140 people which included representation from most of the WYLLN partners (except Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Joseph Priestley, Leeds College of Music, Notre Dame 6<sup>th</sup> Form, New College Pontefract, Greenhead 6<sup>th</sup> Form College and Huddersfield New College), Sector Skills Councils, award winners and guests and organisations such as Yorkshire Forward, Aimhigher and Business Link
- 1.3. The main focus of the evening was the presentation of the West Yorkshire Adult Work-Based Learning Awards. This year 10 learner awards were presented across the 7 WYLLN sectors and for the first time this year there were 2 employer awards and 2 tutor awards. This will give WYLLN some useful case studies evidencing the benefits of higher education to vocational learners and to employers.
- 1.4. This year was the first time WYLLN had invited sponsorship of the event and 14 sponsors came forward to support the event contributing a total of £2975 towards the costs

#### **2. External Evaluation**

- 2.1. The first stage of the evaluation is now well underway. To date, the external evaluator has focused on governance and its administration; the sectors; information, advice and guidance and IAGNow; partnerships and contracts. Interviews have been held with the Chair, the Board member from the accountable body, the HEFCE officer responsible for WYLLN, Yorkshire Forward and a focus group of sector officers was also held. This will be followed by interviews of other Board members, particularly the Chair of the SAF, and a series of questionnaires are being developed and will be issued to partners and stakeholders.
- 2.2. The steering group that was agreed to be established at the last Board meeting has not met due to previous diary commitments.

#### **3. IAG Update**

- 3.1. The delivery of IAG through Partnership and Commissioned activity continues to grow steadily, with nearly 5500 learners supported through 16 partner institutions. Those institutions that have added destination information into IAGnow on the learners supported in 07/08 provide an interesting insight into the choices of the non-traditional learners when considering HE options as detailed in the following table. The variance in the percentage of learners supported

progressing into HE can be attributed to 1<sup>st</sup> year FE learners being supported in 07/08 who will progress into HE in 09/10.

Institution	Learners supported in 07/08	Learners progressing into HE 08/09	
		West Yorkshire	Other
Bradford College	405	22%	5%
Calderdale College	199	52%	7%
Joseph Priestley College	99	9%	6%
Leeds College of Technology	437	32%	7%
Thomas Danby College	142	53%	25%

- 3.2. Leeds College of Technology and the University of Leeds were successful in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of IAG Commissioning both projects had the focus of engaging with potential HE level learners who were not attending one of the WYLLN partner institutions. University of Leeds have now completed their project providing IAG into HE to 157 individuals against a target of 150. Leeds College of Technology are due to complete their project in September 2009 and to date have engaged 75 companies, meeting their project target and supported 375 individuals against the target of 600.
- 3.3. The second round of commissioning started in June 2008 and concluded in March 2009. University of Huddersfield, Calderdale College and Leeds College of Building undertook projects across the 7 sector groups to approach employers and deliver IAG around upskilling to their respective employees. 202 companies were approached against a target of 160, 84 companies engaged fully with the project and supported 202 employees receiving IAG into HE. Overall 452 individuals were supported with IAG against the target of 400, towards the end of the project employees were targeted directly as it became increasingly difficult to engage with and gain the support from employers.
- 3.4. The third round of IAG Commissioning started in November 2008 and is a longitudinal study of 80 individuals representing vocational learners in HE and FE across the 7 WYLLN sectors. The study will track the select group of learners over an 18 month period as they progress into and through HE with the objective of understanding key influencers and motivators affecting their choices and journey into and through HE. Shipley College, Bradford College, Wakefield College, Leeds College of Building and Calderdale College are involved in the delivery of the project which is due to complete in July 2010

3.5. The final round of IAG Commissioning is the development of a 'Toolkit' that can be used in both supported and unsupported situations aimed at preparing individuals for HE, predominantly developed for non-traditional learners at the request of FE and HE tutors. Three institutions have submitted proposals, a panel will receive presentations to select the successful bid on 19<sup>th</sup> June. The product will be developed over the next 12 months and launched in July 2010, sustainability plans are integral to all the submissions a pre-requisite of the project was to ensure the product is maintained and freely available for WYLLN partners until July 2013.

#### **4. Credit and Progression Update**

4.1 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Progression Conference was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The speaker presentations focused on a range of credit issues e.g. HE Credit Framework, Qualification and Credit Framework, whilst the ten workshops covered a range of topics relating to progression and credit. Seventy three delegates attended mainly drawn from partner institutions and strategic members of the sector groups e.g. SSCs and professional bodies. Verbal and written feedback received was very positive and a number of further development needs were highlighted. In part in response to this feedback, and also as a consequence of discussions at the Credit and Progression Task Group and Sub-Group, two other conferences have been arranged, each targeting different audiences. The "Vocational Learners: Supporting their Admission to Higher Education and Selective Courses within West Yorkshire" conference will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and "The Changing World of HE and APEL will be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

4.2. The three Progression Commissioning Round 1 projects which focused on advanced apprentices and part time vocational learners and were delivered by the University of Bradford, University of Leeds and Davici Consulting were completed at the end of March 2009. Project reports and the required outcomes and targets were achieved by each of the three projects, and as part of the dissemination activities each project delivered a presentation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Progression Conference. The seven progression agreements produced as a consequence of the projects have been approved by the WYLLN PA Recognition Panel and are available on the WYLLN website.

4.3 The Progression Commissioning Round 2 project which is focused on 14-19 Diplomas and is being delivered by the University of Huddersfield is progressing and is due to be completed by the end of September 2009. Originally this project was due to be completed by April, however, due to the low number of learners taking up the level 3 diploma lines available from 2008 in West Yorkshire it was agreed by the WYLLN 14-19 Steering Group that the project's timescale should be extended to September 2009. The project has experienced a number of challenges to date. These include difficulty in accessing and engaging with staff within local diploma consortia i.e. actual course deliverers as opposed to local authority coordinators/managers with a responsibility for diplomas; accessing detailed information about curriculum content and in particular information about the Additional and Specialist Learning offers (ASL); and a change in staffing in January when the researcher appointed to the project resigned in order to take up a new post. WYLLN has attempted to alleviate some of the information access challenges for the project by drawing on its contacts and relationships with the local authorities, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) in West Yorkshire, partner institutions who are members of diploma consortia, and the DCSF 14-19 Regional Adviser. The key outcome of phase 1 of the project, a diploma database, will be produced and will be made available to

partner institutions from w/c 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The database will detail key contacts, learner numbers, the curriculum offer, progression relationships/activities etc in regard to the Creative and Media; Society, Health and Development; and the Construction and Built Environment diplomas which are either currently running or due to commence from September 2009 in West Yorkshire. The database will continue to be up dated as the project progresses. Phase 2 activities of the project which include exploration of the formal and informal, established, emerging, or potential progression routes, and partnership working between diploma consortia and HE providers within West Yorkshire are now moving forward, mainly through 1:1 or small group meetings with course and/or admissions staff. An interim project report will be presented to the WYLLN 14-19 Steering Group on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

4.4. The Progression Commissioning Round 3 projects which are focused on APEL and are being delivered by the University of Bradford, LTAS and Leeds City College (LCC) - Technology Campus are all progressing very well. Presentations on these projects form part of the programme for the APEL conference being held on the 10<sup>th</sup> July. Stage 1 activities of the commissioning specification (design and development activities) have been achieved by each project; stage 2 activities (trailing and implementation) are underway. An added value of the trialling activities of LCC - Technology Campus is the production of two case studies for inclusion in the soon to be produced APEL case study leaflet. This leaflet has been requested by partners to accompany the WYLLN APEL leaflet produced and distributed earlier this year. The three projects are due to be completed and reported on by the end of September 2009.

4.5. The remaining progression commissioning monies will be managed in a different way to previous rounds. At the moment it is planned that the focus of activity for the remaining monies will be to split between:

a) Supporting the development of progression agreements between 14-19 diploma lines and higher education courses. The proposal was initiated and shaped by discussions at the WYLLN 14-19 Steering Group, it was presented to and endorsed by the Credit and Progression Task Group, and it was outlined at the recent SAF meeting. The funding specification and submission forms have been circulated to partner institutions, local authorities, the SSAT, and a return date for submissions of the 8<sup>th</sup> July has been set.

b) Supporting the development of progression agreements between advanced apprenticeship programmes and higher education courses. Initial discussions as to how best to take forward this progression activity forward have been held with the DCSF, LSC, West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd (WYLP Ltd), Skills for Care, the Strategic Health Authority and the Health, Social Care and Early Years Sector Group. It is strongly anticipated that the discussions with the health and social care sector organisations will lead to project activity being agreed before the end of July, however at the moment it is not clear to what extent WYLP Ltd wish to or are able to engage with WYLLN in progression activities. As a consequence, the Sector and Progression Manager has begun to have informal conversations with a number of training providers of advanced apprentices to test out their receptiveness to developing progression opportunities with particular employers in the first instance.

4.6. An analysis of the progression agreements that have been recognised by WYLLN is provided in the table below:

Number of recognised progression agreements	44
Number of internal progression agreements	25
Number of external agreement (1 with an employer)	19
Number of progression agreements from level 3 to level 4	29
Number of progression agreements from level 5 to level 6	14
Number of progression agreements from level 6 to level 7	1
Number of multi-entry agreements	8
Number of multi-exit agreement	5

4.7. The priority continues to be for WYLLN recognised progression agreements to have one or more of the following characteristics:

- be from level 3 to level 4
- be multi-entry and/or multi-exit
- be with an external institution
- be with an employer

4.8. As a consequence of progression activities currently funded in 2008/09 through partnership agreements, ASN allocations and commissioned activities it is anticipated that a further fifty six progression agreements will be recognised by WYLLN by the end of September 2009.

4.9. The pilot year of the WYLLN Progression Agreement Framework is drawing to a close. An evaluation of the framework and its associated activities will take place between May and September. The evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods e.g. data analysis, document analysis, survey, and structured interviews. Already two inter-related issues are emerging: ensuring the progression agreements impact on the learner experience and the role of the learner agreement. The outcomes of the evaluation will be reported to the WYLLN Management Board in September 2009.

4.10. The Credit Sub-group has been operating since September 2008. To date it has overseen the production of the WYLLN APEL leaflet, the credit aspects of the programmes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Progression conference and the APEL conference, the production of the Common Principles Statement on APEL which partner institutions have been asked to sign up to, and it is currently putting together a second APEL leaflet which will detail learner APEL case studies.

## **5. Progress on the 14-19 Agenda**

5.1. The WYLLN 14-19 Steering Group has met on a quarterly basis during 2008/09. Key members of the group are the five local authorities and to date their engagement with the WYLLN has focused on

their agendas for the 14-19 diplomas. As a consequence of this, the focus of the steering group's discussions and actions have been on gaining an understanding of the current and proposed 14-19 diploma landscape within West Yorkshire and the operating approaches developing within each local authority, and on agreeing activities to support the development of progression opportunities from the diplomas into higher education. These activities are outlined in points 4.3 and 4.5a. above.

5.2. WYLLN's activities in regard to other aspects of the 14-19 reforms have been targeted at the advanced apprentice route. Progression for these learners is not a priority for the five local authorities currently, however, it is for the DCSF's 14-19 Regional adviser. Progression activities being planned in regard to these learners are outlined in point 4.5.b. above.

5.3. In March 2009 the Construction and Built Environment Sector Group held a half day seminar titled "A Successful partnership model for the 14-19 Diploma - Construction & Built Environment Diploma Event" which was attended by sixty four people. As a consequence of the success of the event three of the other sector groups are considering running a similar event for the Creative and Media diploma line, and the Society, Health and Development diploma line.

## **6. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships**

6.1. The WYLLN is working with Dr. Rory Perrett, Doncaster College and the Knowledge Transfer and Exchange Node, to encourage further education colleges to bid for and deliver successful KTPs with local organisations. Dr. Perrett has secured Yorkshire Forward funding for 12 months to enable him to engage with and work alongside the FECs across the Yorkshire and the Humber region who wish to develop their KTP activity.

6.2. A half day seminar organised by WYLLN and delivered by Dr. Perrett was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and was attended by twenty four delegates representing nine FECs from the sub-region. At the request of those in attendance a KTP section has been established on the WYLLN website and another half day KTP seminar has been scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009. It is understood that follow on discussions have taken place between Dr. Perrett and three local FECs since the April meeting.

6.3. Steve Challenger has been invited to be a member of the Steering Group for the Knowledge Transfer Exchange Node.

## **7. Staffing Changes**

7.1. Joanne Charlesworth and Rachael Brough will be starting their maternity leave in September. Two new members of staff will be appointed on a fixed term basis. One will provide financial and administrative support for the ECIF project – this was built into the WYLLN's proposal to HEFCE – the other will work in a managerial capacity supporting partnership agreements and other WYLLN activities. As a result of the staffing changes the Marketing Plan is being revised for 2009/10.

**8. Summary of performance against targets.**

	<b>Target</b>	<b>July 2008</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Learners supported</b>	7500	2439	6242
<b>Number progressing</b>	3000	132	1402
<b>Progression Agreements</b>	25	0	44
<b>FDs developed</b>	21	4	8
<b>Staff development opp.</b>	500	336	1137