

HEFCE feedback on West Yorkshire LLN monitoring report

Dear Stephen,

Thank you again for the submission of the West Yorkshire monitoring report for AY 2008-09.

Your report has now been read and analysed by the HEFCE North institutional team and by the LLN team and I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some feedback on your submission. As with last year, we are anticipating that an overall analysis of the progress of LLNs as a whole will be produced and published on our website towards the end of 2009/early 2010.

It is encouraging to see that West Yorkshire has achieved many of its original milestones. In addition it is pleasing to note that the three year targets for progression agreements have been met after two years. This is reflected in the numbers of learners progressing with the LLN, with almost 50% of the three year target being reached within the first year.

It is noticeable that the LLN has not met its targets in establishing a Credit Framework and Foundation degrees being developed in particular sectors. Nonetheless, it is pleasing to see the efforts being made in developing agendas to tackle these issues and we look forward to receiving results on how this transpires over the next year. In addition we welcome feedback on how the new targets for the forthcoming year develop.

In terms of sustainability, we recognise that the LLN intends to take a staged approach to hopefully achieve this goal, allowing institutions to determine whether different activities will be maintained. We would also be interested to hear the results on the evaluation that has been commissioned to help determine the impact of the Network to partners and stakeholders. As you rightly suggest this may have a major influence on sustainability in the future.

We are particularly pleased at the success of partnership building within the network which has led to strong engagement with the West Yorkshire Progression Agreement Framework. This demonstrates the value that partners see in the work being undertaken by the LLN and in particular the success of the LLN in strengthening existing partnerships between HE and FE. The LLN has also contributed to the employer engagement agenda across West Yorkshire. In particular the way the LLN has directly engaged with employers through curriculum development activities, marketing and staff development activities. This has resulted in a large percentage of new/modified curricula developing with the assistance of employer engagement.

We were interested to hear of the work that you have been undertaking around equality and diversity, in particular the two projects that have been funded with a focus on access and the delivery of higher education. We would welcome feedback on how these projects transpire and in particular the level of impact it has on partner institutions.

There is continued effort to improve the curriculum development and it is encouraging to see the combined efforts of the LMIE and the CMSA to undertake the development of enterprise education. In addition it is pleasing to note the activities relating to CPD development in an array of subjects. With regards to limitations on ASNs introduced by HEFCE, we appreciate your concerns and it is worrying that a number of HE partners have reconsidered their involvement in some of the curriculum activities. However, we would urge the LLN to focus on ensuring that activities and agreements created by the network continue to become embedded into the partner institutions, rather than rely on the continued distribution of ASNs.

The LLN appears to have taken a reflective approach to developing their IAG activity and it is pleasing to note the benefits of IAGnow as it tracks IAG activity. This gives a good impression of the number of learners supported and those that have progressed into HE. It is particularly encouraging that 70% progress to an institution within West Yorkshire, highlighting the regional benefits of the LLN. Furthermore, we appreciated the longitudinal study representing vocational learners and the influences and motivators affecting their journey. This will provide useful feedback and we welcome any results on how the study develops. In addition, the use of a toolkit seems particularly sensible and it is encouraging that it will remain available to partners beyond the HEFCE funding period.

The LLN has been proactive with regards to the 14-19 diploma and the results of your research project has provided a steer to facilitate the development and delivery of progression agreements and enhance partnership working between diploma consortia and HE providers. This is encouraging and we look forward to seeing how this develops in your next report.

Thank you once again for the hard work that has gone into producing the report. It has enabled us to gain a thorough insight into the considerable progress being made and we hope that the LLN has found the data collection a useful process for your own development, monitoring and evaluation.

Kind Regards

Nicholas Dibley

Nicholas Dibley
Higher Education Policy Adviser

Higher Education Funding Council for England
Northavon House
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QD
Tel: 0117 931 7414
e-mail: n.dibley@hefce.ac.uk