

## **West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network**

### **Project Evaluation**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. There are several mechanisms for the evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks. Peer evaluation has been conducted across all LLNs, where two networks are partnered and a comparison of approaches and activities is undertaken. In July 2008, HEFCE introduced monitoring templates to provide them with standardised data on the activity of LLNs. A progress report was also submitted. Although not undertaken by all LLNs, the WYLLN is committed to carrying out an external evaluation.
- 1.2. This paper presents progress to date on each of these evaluation processes.

#### **2. Peer Evaluation**

- 2.1. The WYLLN was partnered with the South West LLN (SWLLN) for the purposes of this evaluation. The process involved the exchange of documents followed by a two day visit of three of the WYLLN officers to Bournemouth to meet the SWLLN team. During this time issues that had emerged from documentation were explored in smaller groups with a focus on Governance and Management, Partnerships, Progression, Information, Advice and Guidance and Monitoring and Evaluation. The report is attached to this paper.
- 2.2. The process of peer evaluation was extremely useful as an exercise to explore different approaches to making LLNs work, but it has to be questioned as to how evaluative the process was. A review of the report demonstrates similarities, for example the time taken to establish the networks as an operational unit, and differences for example in governance, but it is difficult to make any meaningful evaluative observations that would have an impact on future operations.

#### **3. HEFCE Monitoring**

- 3.1. The progress report and monitoring templates were submitted to HEFCE on 30<sup>th</sup> October following final approval by the Chair and the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the accountable body.
- 3.2. Although there are issues regarding how different LLNs have generated the data, it has allowed HEFCE to carry out some initial analysis and for the first time begin to understand the impact of the LLNs across the country. The report is attached to this paper.
- 3.3. Some headline figures from the report are that across the country there are over 56,000 individuals have received some form of IAG, 1,723 progression agreements in place, with an expected number of 32,844 learners progressing; the majority of these progressing from BTEC courses. Not only will this data provide information on the performance of LLNs as a whole. It will also inform the setting of future targets for the WYLLN.

3.4. Individual feedback from HEFCE on the WYLLN's report and data has just recently been received (see attached email). In the main it merely reflects the points made by the report. The key points that probably need highlighting are

- They are interested in the planned work on progression around the 14-19 Diplomas
- The link with the HEIF 3-funded White Rose Health Innovation Partnership (WRHIP)
- They would have liked to have seen more detail in the report on work to promote equality and diversity

3.5. The WYLLN will address the points made in this feedback in future activities.

#### **4. External Evaluation**

4.1. It is proposed that the external evaluation of the project is undertaken as two separate pieces of work. The first will look at the effectiveness of the current activities to inform and improve future operations of the Network. The second will be carried out at a later stage and address the impact the project has had on progression of vocational and work based learners and partner institutions. The draft specification is attached.

#### **5. Actions for the Board**

5.1. Members of the Board are asked to receive the paper and to approve the approach to external evaluation.