



# **West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network – Six Month Report**

**November 2007**

# West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network – Six Month Report

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## Executive Summary

1. The aim of the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network (WYLLN) is to strengthen the performance of West Yorkshire businesses and the wider regional economy through improved vocational and work-based progression of young people and adults into higher education. Funding of the project by HEFCE was approved from March 2007 until July 2010.
2. The central team is based at the University of Huddersfield and the posts will be filled by November 2007.
3. The Management Board is made up of key partners representing the further education (FE) and higher education (HE) sectors. Representation also comes from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Yorkshire Forward and West Yorkshire Careers. The project was based on well-established partnership. This wider partnership contributes to the delivery of the WYLLN, through the Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF), whose meetings are scheduled to precede those of the Management Board.
4. Both the SAF and the Management Board have carried out a review of the business plan to ensure that not only will the targets be met, but that a lasting legacy will be achieved. Following this review a new funding model was approved. It was agreed that information advice and guidance (IAG), sector and progression activities will be funded through partnership agreements with the further education colleges (FECs) and higher education institutions (HEIs) with specific activities commissioned through the wider partnership.
5. An audit of IAG provision in West Yorkshire has been undertaken through a questionnaire delivered to FECs and through face to face meetings with other IAG organisations. The analysis from the audit, together with the outcomes of the SAF and an event involving IAG practitioners, identified gaps in current provision and which learner groups failed to receive adequate support. This analysis will inform the priorities of the partnership agreements and commissioned activities.
6. The sector groups have now been established. There is a broad membership of the groups which will enable them to engage with the development and delivery of the 14-19 specialised diplomas and the activities of the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).
7. 100 ASNs have been received from HEFCE for the academic year 2007/8 and 368 were received for 2008/9. The 2007/8 ASNs were allocated to four colleges against an agreed set of criteria.
8. Progression activities are less advanced, although much work has been done on the development of a progression model through the involvement of the WYLLN in national initiatives.
9. Overall progress has not kept pace with the original timescales laid out in the business plan for the first part of the project. This has been due in the main to the time it has taken to appoint the central team. However, much work has been done in building the foundations for a successful project and no change to the original targets and milestones is planned.

## Background

10. The aim of the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network is to strengthen the performance of West Yorkshire businesses and the wider regional economy through improved vocational and work-based progression of young people and adults into higher education. By the end of the project the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network will have created:
- A sustainable higher-level skills partnership with increased levels of trust and more effective ways of joint working between providers, employers and stakeholders.
  - A minimum of 25 Progression Agreements with clear articulation arrangements and a credit framework which crosses institutions and newly developed higher level skills curricula, enabling the progression of 3,000 vocational and work-based learners into higher education, resulting in a more highly qualified workforce.
  - A recognised credit framework for vocational and work-based learners which is portable across institutions and recognises and values vocational and work-based learners.
  - A minimum of three foundation degrees or equivalent per sector in areas relevant and important to employers and the economy.
  - Stronger links between 1,000 businesses and Higher and Further Education and Work-based Learning providers with more relevant and responsive higher-level skills provision.
  - More innovative and enterprising graduates and employees, with leadership and management skills, who are able to realise the new opportunities of the knowledge based economy.
  - More transparent, accessible and recognisable information, advice and guidance systems for employers and vocational learners resulting in 7,500 learners and 1,000 employers benefiting.
  - Better trained staff able to support progression within and between vocational and academic learning through the provision of 500 staff development opportunities.
11. Funding for the project was approved by HEFCE from March 2007 until July 2010: £5.9 million as a grant from HEFCE with the partners committing another £2.2 million to the project.
12. The activities of the WYLLN have been structured into sectors in such a way that they link with the priorities of Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and the Humber) and those of the Learning and Skills Council for West Yorkshire (LSC WY). The lead institution for each sector is based on their track record, particularly in relation to employer engagement. Consequently many lead institutions are Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) or are part of a skills academy. The WYLLN Sectors and their lead institutions are given in Table 1.

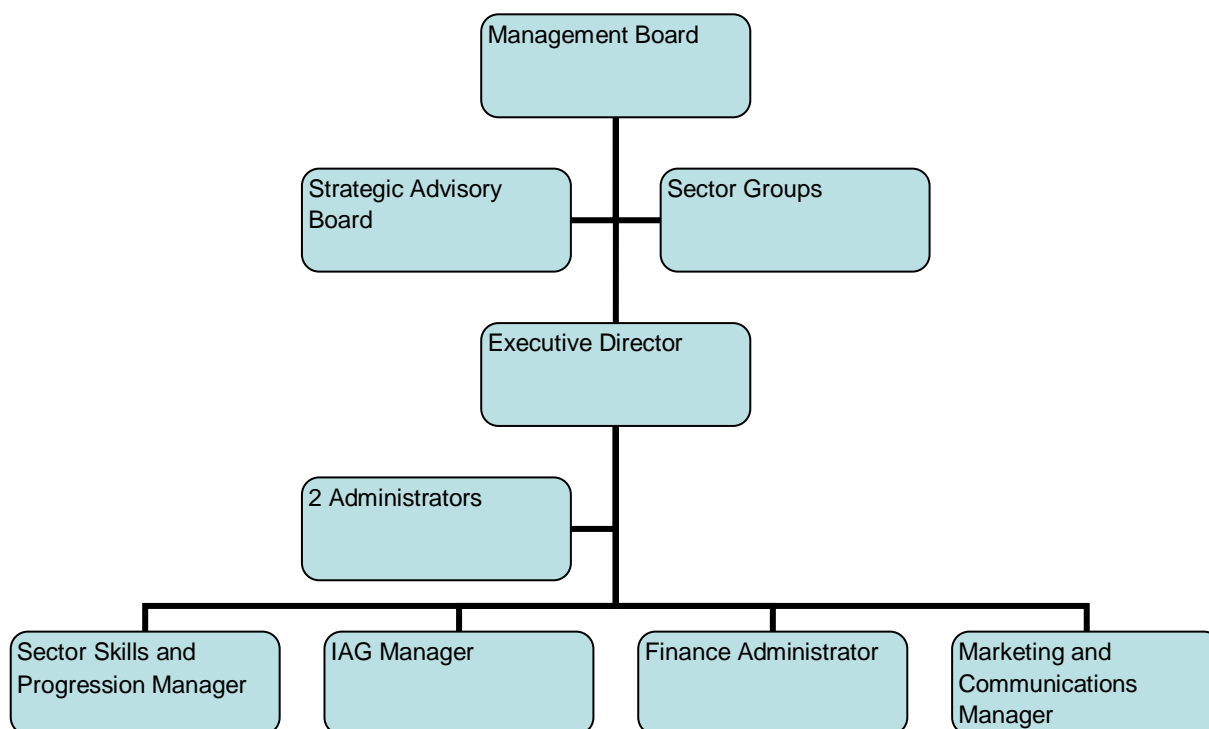
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Lead Institution</b>
Construction and the built environment	Leeds College of Building
Digital industries including creative digital, ICT and print	The New Technology Institute West Yorkshire
Business Services including the finance sector,	Park Lane College

logistics and retail	
Advanced engineering and manufacturing including food manufacturing and related industrial chemistry	The University of Huddersfield
Culture, media, sports and the arts; leisure, hospitality and tourism	Leeds Metropolitan University
Health, social care and early years	The University of Bradford
Management, leadership, innovation and enterprise (cross cutting theme)	Wakefield College

**Table 1 WYLLN Sector and Lead Institutions**

## Infrastructure

13. The organisational structure of the Network is shown in diagram 1.



**Diagram 1 Current West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network Organisational Chart**

14. At the time of writing, only three officers are in post: the Director, the Sector Skills/Progression Manager and the Information, Advice and Guidance Manager. The Director took up his post from the 1st of May, the Sector Skills/Progression Manager from the 2nd July and the IAG Manager from the 6th August.
15. The Communications and Marketing Manager, the Finance Administrator and the two administrative posts have been appointed and will be taking up their posts at the beginning of November 2007. A decision on recruiting an MIS Officer post, as described in the business plan, has yet to be made. This will be done once a better understanding of the skills and MIS requirements has been developed. This will

happen once the Network is more operational. Consequently this post has been excluded from the diagram.

16. Personnel from the Sector Lead Institutions, who will lead the Sector activities, have now been identified. Further details are provided in the Sector Activities section.

17. Accommodation is provided by the University of Huddersfield. The central team moved to their permanent accommodation in November.

## Governance and Partnership

18. The membership of the Management Board is set out in Table 2.

Name	Organisation	Representing
Alison Wilson	Yorkshire Forward	Regional Development Agency
Cath Orange	Leeds Met University	The digital and arts media and culture sectors and HE
Cristina George	Learning and Skills Council	LSC – West Yorkshire
David Fell	Park Lane College	Business and finance sector and FE
Edmund Wigan	Leeds College of Art and Design	Further Education
Geoff Layer	The University of Bradford	The health and social care sector and HE
Ian Billyard	Leeds College of Building	The construction and built environment sector and FE
Jayne Rawlins		West Yorkshire Careers Companies
Kaye Fisher (Deputy Chair)	Wakefield College	The leadership and management sector and FE
Mark Shields	Trinity and All Saints College	Higher Education Colleges
Sue Frost	The University of Huddersfield	The advanced engineering and manufacturing sector and HE
Vivien Jones (Chair)	The University of Leeds	Higher Education
Michele Sutton	Bradford College	Further Education
Stephen Challenger	Executive Director	WYLLN

**Table 2 WYLLN Management Board membership**

19. Although the membership of the Board has changed in personnel terms since the beginning of the project, the representation has not.

20. Since the approval of the project there has been support from the wider network of partners. These include

Bradford College

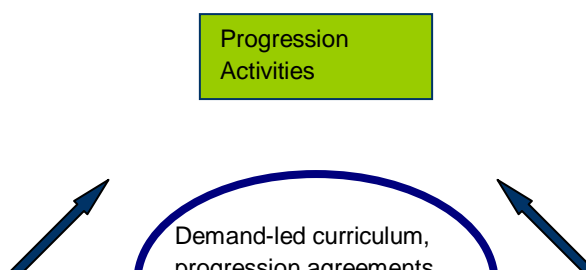
Yorkshire Forward

Calderdale College	West Yorkshire Learning Provider
Dewsbury College	Network (WYLP)
Huddersfield New College	Sector Clusters
Huddersfield Technical College	Train to Gain Brokers
Joseph Priestley College	Sector Skills Councils
Keighley College	Nextstep
Leeds College of Art and Design	Connexions
Leeds College of Building	West Yorkshire Regional TUC for
Leeds College of Music	Yorkshire and the Humber
Leeds College of Technology	Institute of Directors Yorkshire Region
Leeds Metropolitan University	CBI Yorkshire Region
Park Lane College	Leeds Chamber of Commerce and
ShIPLEY College	Industry
The Open University	Bradford Chamber of Commerce and
Thomas Danby College	Industry
Trinity and All Saints Higher	Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Education College	and Industry
University of Bradford	Investors in People
University of Huddersfield	Sector Skills Development Agency
University of Leeds	Regional Skills Partnership
Wakefield College	West Yorkshire Enterprise Partnership
Aimhigher	Business Link West Yorkshire
Foundation Degree Forward	West Yorkshire IAG Partnership
	West Yorkshire Learning and Skills
	Council

21. There has been a lot of support from the wider partnership, which forms the basis of the Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF). SAF meetings are chaired by the Deputy Chair of the Management Board and are timed to take place prior to Board meetings so that the SAF's recommendations can be promptly considered.
22. Recently the SAF has been used to consider the future of the Network, once the project comes to an end. In particular it has tried to identify what legacies could be left, so that the partnership will achieve more than just the outcomes identified within the Business Plan. The legacies identified and adopted by the Board are
- Effective provision of information on higher level skills/professional development provision in West Yorkshire
  - Inclusive progression frameworks
  - Mainstreaming of development programme for the wider partnership
  - Improved perception of the value of HE within the region
  - Flexible range of demand-led products
  - Culture of Lifelong Learning
23. The SAF also made recommendations on how best to deliver the Business Plan and these were adopted by the Board.

## Delivering the Business Plan

24. The business plan was based around three types of activities: progression activities, information, advice and guidance activities and sector activities.
25. Progression activities are those that smooth the transition of our target learners into and through higher education. In the business plan these activities were planned to be carried by posts located in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and involve
- Developing Progression Agreements across and between institutions
  - Identifying and developing strategies to overcome barriers to progression
  - Developing more flexible approaches to validation
  - Developing an over-arching policy for vocational learners
  - Exploring opportunities for joint validation
  - Contributing to the development of a credit framework
26. Information, advice and guidance activities were identified in the business plan as being the responsibility of the further education colleges including the 6th form colleges. The type of activity carried out by them would include
- Auditing existing IAG activities within the organisation
  - Contributing to the development of the IAG model
  - Tracking interventions and reporting on destination and progression
  - Contributing to the single point of access including updates on learning ladder information
  - Achieving appropriate standards
27. Sector activities, delivered through the sector groups, have been summarised as follows:
- Mapping learner providers, curriculum and projects taking place within the sub-region
  - Developing the employer offer
  - Identifying curriculum development activities, linking developments to progression agreements
  - Linking developments to credit framework
  - Establishing Curriculum Task Groups
  - Producing information and promotional materials
  - Developing relationships with partners
  - Allocation of additional student numbers
28. Progression, IAG and sector activities, as articulated in the business plan, are central to the success of the WYLLN. They do not, however, work in isolation. The integrated model the Network is using is summarised in diagram 2.



**Diagram 2. Relationship between the sector, IAG and progression activities**

29. The approach to sector activities received full support from the SAF. It was seen to be central to the work of the WYLLN because, for each of our sectors, it would be creating

- A new relationship with employers
- A new curriculum to meet employer needs
- New progression routes
- A common credit framework
- Demand-led provision through the application of additional student numbers

30. Certain logical inconsistencies were identified with locating progression activities in HEIs and IAG activities in Further Education Colleges (FECs). The majority of FECs in West Yorkshire deliver a higher education curriculum. Some progression activities have as much relevance to them as to the HEIs, particularly when the numbers of HE learners are large. One general FE College, for example, has over 5000 learners on higher education programmes. Two other colleges have a very similar proportion of HE and FE provision. However, one is in the HE sector and, according to the terms of the business plan, would be funded for progression activities; the other is in the FE sector and would not.

31. Delivering IAG with posts located in FE Colleges presented other difficulties. One university felt that it could make a major contribution to providing information, advice and guidance to potential learners, but could contribute little to progression activities. While the results of an audit of IAG activities in partner FE Colleges indicated that there was little experience of delivering IAG to particular client groups, for example individuals qualified or skilled to level 3 and already in the workplace, and advanced modern apprentices.

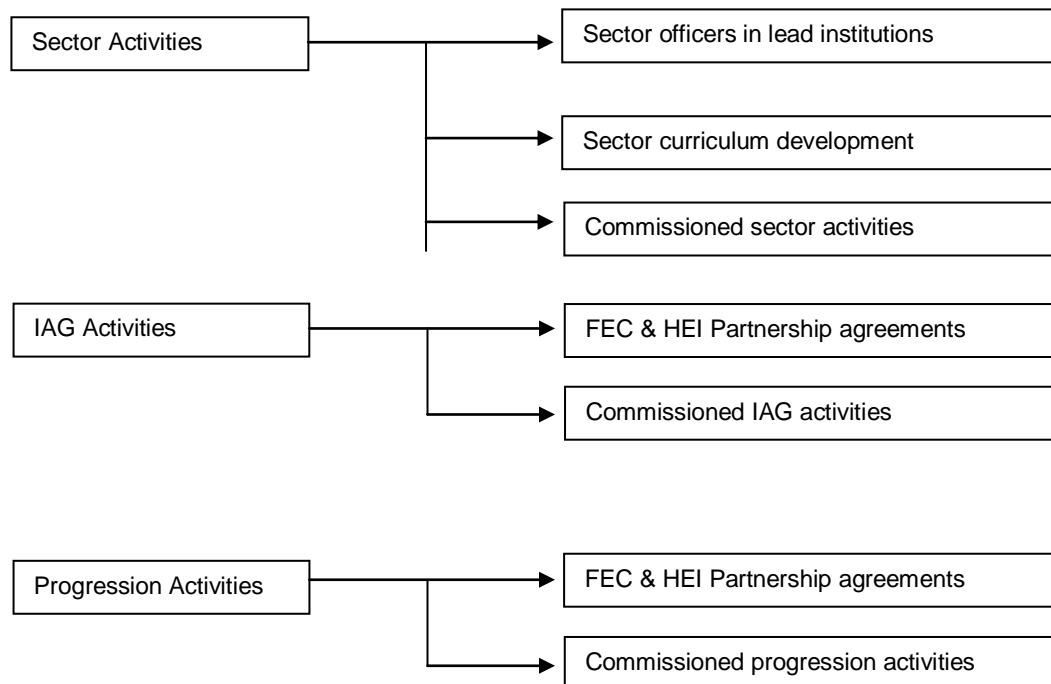
32. The Strategic Advisory Forum considered different learner groups and how difficult it might be to engage with them. Their views are summarised in Table 3:

<b>Client Group</b>	
Individuals qualified to level 3, but not in learning or employment	3
Individuals already in learning (at level 3 or above)	2

Advanced modern apprentices	4
Employees already in learning	4
Employees qualified to level 3 or above, but not in learning	3

**Table 3 Assessment of hard to reach client groups by the SAF (where 1 indicates the easiest to reach potential learners and 4 the hardest to reach)**

33. To deliver to some of the hardest to reach potential learners, the SAF agreed that placing IAG Officers solely in FE colleges may not be the most effective approach.
34. The views of the wider partnership as expressed in the Strategic Advisory Forum were received by the Management Board, who agreed a different approach to delivering the business plan.
35. It was agreed by the Board to continue to fund sector, IAG and progression activities with the budget adjusted to ensure that there are funds created to commission specific products and services. These funds would be available to the wider partnership.
36. Each of the FECs and HEIs will be funded directly through a formula based on the volume of learners on level 3 and above programmes in the LLN's priority sectors. Each institution will be able to select the types of activities they wish to carry out against a menu of progression and IAG activities prepared by the LLN's officers. Some may select progression activities, some IAG activities, while others may select to carry out a mixture of both. The delivery model is summarised in diagram 3.



**Diagram 3. Revised structure for delivering the business plan**

37. Task groups for information, advice and guidance, credit and progression, and management information systems are in the process of being established, but have not yet met. There is cross-representation to ensure the integration of sector, IAG and progression activities as the business plan is rolled out.

## Information, advice and guidance

38. The IAG Manager is responsible for improving the coherence and accessibility of higher education information, advice and guidance for employers and vocational learners. To achieve this, a staged approach has been taken. Firstly an audit of IAG provision across West Yorkshire has been undertaken and evaluated, to identify any gaps. From this evaluation, the allocation of resources across the Network will be determined and contracted for, in line with sector requirements and partner organisations, to ensure a single, cohesive response mechanism for the provision of IAG to vocational and work-based learners. This will be enhanced by the development of a tracking system, which will support and encourage new learners to participate in, progress through and achieve in higher education.

39. The audit of IAG provision, undertaken in September across West Yorkshire, comprised of two key activities: face to face meetings with organisations representing community based activity and work-based learning providers; and a structured questionnaire sent to all Student Support Services departments within the 17 partner FECs in the network (Appendix 1).

40. From the audit, community based IAG provision across West Yorkshire appears to be shaped more by the organisations receiving the funding, and the availability of the

funding, rather than the actual demand for specialist IAG services such as IAG into HE. The nextstep funding & operation is very effective in engaging individuals at pre-level 2 and under certain circumstances pre-level 3; however as with most other LSC funded programmes within the community such as Train to Gain, there is little or no support available for progression beyond Level 3 and into HE.

41. The audit also identified that the key issues within IAG provision in commercial work-based learning providers are around quality, capacity and a general lack of understanding of IAG; however, increasingly more work-based learning providers are working towards and achieving Matrix accreditation. Any IAG work with Modern Apprentices tends to centre on entry and course progress. There is also a tendency to assume that once they become Modern Apprentices the employer becomes responsible for their career and next steps.
42. In discussing Matrix accreditation, many non-FE IAG providers see Matrix as an unnecessary mechanism to secure revenues through the assessment process. There is also a widespread belief that the matrix does not actually measure or improve quality, however it does set the minimum criteria that clients can expect to achieve and should not be discounted as a criterion for organisations wishing to undertake commissioned activity through WYLLN.
43. Following introductory conversations with senior representatives from the student services departments in the FE sector, questionnaires were e-mailed to the nominated contacts. 15 of the 17 partner FECs completed the questionnaire providing valuable information to assist the scoping of the IAG model for both the partnership and commissioned activity. The following details the key findings from the questionnaire.
  - Two thirds of respondents have departmental Matrix accreditation
  - Those without accreditation typically have few vocational learners and no apprentices
  - A wealth of information and data relating to IAG interventions is collected and stored electronically at both college and curriculum level
  - The majority of staff within the Student Support Services working on IAG have NVQ Level 3 in Guidance with numerous individuals holding NVQ Level 4 and the Diploma in Careers Guidance (Dip CG)
  - Staff training needs within the Student Support Services are reviewed and identified on a regular basis, training and professional development is an integral part of the operation
  - Regarding discrete IAG activity with vocational learners at Level 3, all respondents advised there was a considerable amount of activity and support for the students, including information and advice on progression opportunities (into HE), UCAS applications and completing personal statements. Aimhigher funded projects, namely Apprentices go higher, were also noted as additional support available to the students
  - Only 4 of the 15 FECs advised that tutorial support with UCAS applications and higher education preparation sessions were an integral part of the embedded IAG.
  - IAG activity targeted towards Modern Apprentices is very scarce. From the information provided, 40% of the FECs indicated there was no targeted IAG

- activity with MAs, the other respondents relied heavily on support from Aimhigher and connexions to deliver the IAG to MAs
- All FECs advised of the close working relationship with connexions. Operational partnerships were also noted with nextstep and Aimhigher.
  - Key themes started to appear from the FECs regarding support and information that would particularly benefit them and IAG practitioners in delivering HE IAG for non-traditional learners e.g. 'writing a dynamic personal statement', 'advice sessions for parents', 'financial information'.
44. The information gathered from the questionnaire and meetings with the wider partnership provided an outline agenda for the IAG Planning Day held on Tuesday 16th October. This was the first IAG focused event for WYLLN aimed at the wider network to raise awareness of the LLN, IAG activity and the funding regime. Objectives for the day were
- To understand the aims and objectives of the WYLLN and how it will impact on the West Yorkshire Learner.
  - To understand the relationship between IAG, Progression and Sector activities within WYLLN.
  - To define the WYLLN IAG model and explore possible activities to form an operational framework for the initiative.
  - To discuss possible resources and websites to support the model.
  - To understand the process for approval of activities/application for funding.
45. 28 representatives from partner organisations within the wider network attended the IAG Planning Day. In addition to the FECs and HEIs, individuals attended from nextstep, connexions, LSC, WYLP Ltd and Aimhigher.
46. Two activities held during the event focused the audience to firstly consider the varying target client groups for the delivery of IAG and their differing needs, and the identification of supportive tools, products and resources available to assist the delivery of IAG in line with the clients' differing needs.
47. The outcome of the activities was the recognition of the challenges in delivering IAG to non-traditional learners to effectively accommodate their needs and the identification of resource/information development opportunities that could be funded by the network to accommodate some of the gaps in resources. The full responses may be seen in Appendix 2.
48. Key themes from the delegates when considering the differing needs and challenges of our target client groups included:
- Perception of an overall lack of aspiration and consequently demand for progression from the clients
  - Negative view on the amount of time and money required to pursue progression
  - Pessimistic understanding of vocational qualifications, not considered as a realistic stepping stone to HE
49. When considering the IAG required to overcome some of the issues raised, delegates noted the following;

- Marketing, raising awareness of opportunities, aspirations and ultimately advocacy of the concept of progressing into HE
  - Provide clear information on the 'currency' of vocational qualifications in relation to accessing HE
  - Develop a single information (referral) point (face2face, phone, web) that can support individuals appropriately and provide clear, concise information on all aspects of progression into HE
50. In the second activity delegates were asked to consider existing IAG tools and resources used in relation to IAG into HE and considering our client needs, identify gaps in provision and development opportunities. Some of the key product development opportunities noted were
- Good, well publicised website to act as a portal to provide access to all available 'into HE' support resources to support learner, IAG Practitioner and employer
  - Employers reference framework to provide a cost/benefit analysis of developing higher level skills for employers
  - Support for UCAS application process – 'Personal Statement Builder'
  - Diagnostic Tool – 'Are you ready to study HE?'
  - Learning Ladders showing progression routes
51. In summary the IAG Planning event provided a valuable platform to create greater awareness and understanding of the WYLLN objectives and the contribution and support required from a wide range of partners to ensure the success of the initiative in addition to generating a wealth of ideas and activity to build into the partnership and commissioned activity.
52. Considering the outcomes of the audit and IAG Planning event in relation to future partnership and commissioned activity, early thoughts are to ensure the partnership activity focuses on enhancing existing IAG provision within FECs with particular emphasis on those learners currently excluded from mainstream provision - Modern Apprentices, for example. The commissioned activity will focus on targeting those potential learners outside of the FECs, in employment (working with the employers), work based learning (working with employers and learners) and in the community (outreach activity). There may also be an element of product/resource development within the commissioned activity to accommodate some of the gaps identified.

## **Sector activities**

53. The Sector Skills and Progression Manager is responsible for initiating, planning, developing, maintaining and evaluating all sector activities. As reported above (Table 1), the WYLLN is focusing its activities around seven sectors which reflect the sub-regional higher level skill priorities identified by Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and the Humber) and those of the Learning and Skills Council for West Yorkshire (LSC WY):
- Construction and the Built Environment
  - Digital Industries including Creative Digital, ICT and Print
  - Business Services including the Finance Sector, Logistics and Retail

- Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing including Food Manufacturing, and related Industrial Chemistry
  - Culture, Media, Sports and the Arts; Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism
  - Health, Social Care and Early Years
  - Management, Leadership, Innovation and Enterprise (as a discipline and cross cutting theme)
54. The seven Sector Groups provide the engine through which the WYLLN will drive, shape and deliver its sector activities over the lifetime of the project. Each Sector Group is convened and led by a Sector Officer. The Sector Officer for each Sector Group is now in place. The Lead Institutions have managed recruitment to these posts in a number of ways. Two institutions have recruited externally; one institution has seconded an existing member of staff; two institutions have built the role into a new senior management post; and two institutions have subsumed the role into the responsibilities of an existing senior manager, although one of these institutions has now decided to recruit to the post externally. All of the Sector Officers have experience of delivering and managing learning programmes within their specific sector and/or experience of engaging with employers.
55. An initial membership list for each sector group has been established. The membership of the sector groups has been drawn from the following institutions / organisations:
- Further Education Colleges – teaching staff
  - Higher Education Institutions – academic staff
  - Private Work-based Learning Providers - trainers
  - Local Authority - 14 – 19 Advisers
  - Sector Skill Councils – regional managers, sub-regional coordinators
  - Local employers - managers, training and development managers
  - Professional bodies - CPD/qualification advisers
  - TUC UnionLearn – Development Coordinators
- A summary of the membership of the seven sector groups can be found in Appendix 3.
56. The membership to date has been secured through the use of the following processes from July onwards:
- 21 meetings have been held with representatives from the wider partnership
  - 10 meetings have been held with representatives from learning provider institutions/organisations
  - a letter inviting nominations for membership of the sector groups was circulated to all 25 learning provider institutions and the West Yorkshire Learning Providers (WYLP) network.
57. Our contact and engagement with ten Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) to date has been very positive and has resulted in each of the SSCs becoming a member of the appropriate sector group(s). We have been able to explore common ground and priorities with each of the ten SSCs and have identified areas for development with each e.g. leadership and management requirements (ConstructionSkills), establishing a skills academy (SEMTA), progression issues for technician level staff (SEMTA), courses achieving sector endorsement (Skillset). These development areas will be

represented within the Sector Groups directly via a named SSC staff member. Sector Skill Councils engaged with Sector Group activities to date include:

- Construction Skills
- Creative and Cultural Skills
- e-skills UK
- Financial Services Skills Council
- SEMTA
- Skills for Care and Development
- Skills for Health
- Skillset
- SkillsmartRetail
- Summitskills

58. During November we shall be following up on initial contacts made with a further six Sector Skills Councils with the aim of engaging them in the activities of our relevant Sector Groups:

- Cogent
- Improve
- People 1<sup>st</sup>
- Proskills UK
- Skills for Logistics
- SkillsActive

59. A costed work plan approach (see appendix 4) to managing the activities of the Sector Groups for 2007/08 has been devised by the Sector Skills and Progression Manager following consultation with the Executive Director, Sector Officers, and with reference to the Business Plan. The costed work plan requires each sector group to action the following activities:

- Establish the membership, meeting structure & communications schedule
- Identify Sector Champions
- Identify representatives for WYLLN's Credit and Progression Task Group and IAG Task Group
- Complete an audit of current/planned learning provision at level 4 and 5 across West Yorkshire
- Identify curriculum areas for development (including new programmes), and establish curriculum development sub-groups
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy to employers
- Identify training and development needs of group members and wider stakeholders
- Identify and develop curriculum projects
- Coordinate the applications for Additional Student Numbers

60. Targets and budgets recorded within the Business Plan relevant to the sector groups have been profiled against these activities accordingly. At the moment, a flat profile approach has been adopted i.e. the same target volumes and budget levels for each activity have been allocated to each sector group. However, it is anticipated that as the costed work plans for 2007/08 are submitted and implemented it may be

appropriate and/or necessary to differentiate the profiles between sector groups in terms of targets and budgets.

61. Although the costed work plan is focused on activities to be initiated and developed from October 2007 to July 2008, it is recognised for example that curriculum development activities may need to span beyond year 1 and into year 2. To both encourage and enable Sector Groups to take both a short and medium term approach to planning their activities, targets and budget indicators for the three year period of the Business Plan have been included in the costed work plan.
62. The costed work plan approach was introduced, discussed and agreed with Sector Officers and Sector Lead institution representatives during a planning meeting held on the 13th September. All sector groups were represented at the meeting. The next meeting of the Sector Officers will be held on the 29th November and a review of processes to implement the costed work plan will be an agenda item.
- The first action point for Sector Officers from the meeting on the 13th September was to convene the first meeting of their sector group before the end of October.
63. As reported above under paragraph 56, meetings have been held with representatives from a number of the wider partners. Discussions with these partners have been very positive and have resulted in joint working relationships being established. For some partners this has included becoming an attending member of the sector groups. However, some of the partners, rather than be an attending member of a sector group, would prefer to be a consulting member to one or more of the sector groups, and engage in supporting the curriculum, employer engagement and marketing work of the groups in an overarching way e.g. providing LMI, access to their employer members, promoting the work of the WYLLN via their newsletters, providing opportunities to meet with and present to employer members. The organisations that prefer to operate this consultancy relationship include:
- liP – Yorkshire and Humberside
  - SSDA
  - FdF
  - CBI
  - Leeds Chamber of Commerce
  - Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
  - Bradford Chamber of Commerce
  - Business Link
  - Yorkshire Forward
  - LSC - Train to Gain
  - Kirklees Economic Development Unit
64. Contact with the national LLN Workstrands which are relevant to our sector groups and sector activities has been established:
- Construction and the Built Environment
  - Engineering
  - Health and Social Care
  - Art, Design and Creative industries
  - Employer Engagement

65. Each of these national workstrands holds meetings twice a year and the WYLLN will encourage and support the attendance of sector group members at these meetings.
66. Additional student numbers allocated to the WYLLN will be allocated through the sector groups to support their curriculum developments. 110 ASNs were awarded for the academic year 2007/8 and 368 (248 Foundation Degrees, 100 undergraduate provision and 20 post graduate provision) for 2008/9.
67. The allocation for 2007/8 could not be made through the sector groups as they were yet to be established. They were taken up by colleges that met the criteria given in Table 4.

CRITERION	COMMENTS
The course must have full approval by relevant HEI.	
The course must have a track record of delivering student numbers to target.	
The course must fit one of the priority areas.	<p>The areas described in the plan are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction and the Built Environment</li> <li>• Digital Industries including Creative Digital, ICT and Print.</li> <li>• Business Services including the Finance Sector, Logistics and Retail.</li> <li>• Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing including Food Manufacturing and related Industrial Chemistry.</li> <li>• Culture, Media, Sports and the Arts; Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism.</li> <li>• Health, Social Care and Early Years.</li> <li>• Management, Leadership, Innovation and Enterprise (this is a cross-cutting theme across all other sectors).</li> </ul>
The qualification must have been designed <b>with</b> employers.	For successful validation of applied qualifications, employers are involved in the process. For some courses they are only involved at validation. For others they are involved at the beginning of the development process and indeed instigate the course development. Preferences will be given to the latter.

The course is delivered in a flexible way to support learners in the workplace.	Flexibility could be demonstrated in several ways, for example: the course may involve distance or e-learning; it may be part of an existing qualification pathway with several certificated 'stop-off' points; or it may also be designed in such a way to give credit for CPD programmes already in place in a company. This is not an exhaustive list and there will be many other examples of flexibility.
The course is part of a progression agreement with other institutions.	This would be a formal or semi-formal agreement that describes the requirements learners on level 3 vocational courses need to meet before they can progress on to the degree programme.
The proposal supports the partnership approach that lies at the heart of the WYLLN.	This could be where more than one institution has gone through a joint validation process or where they are involved in joint delivery.

**Table 4 Criteria for allocating 2007/8 ASNs**

68. The college and sectors receiving the 2007/8 ASNs allocations are shown in table 5:

<b>College</b>	<b>Sector</b>
Bradford College	Culture, Media, Sports and the Arts; Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism Health, Social Care and Early Years
Leeds College of Art and Design	Culture, Media, Sports and the Arts; Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism
Park Lane College, Leeds	Business Services including the Finance Sector, Logistics and Retail
Wakefield College	Culture, Media, Sports and the Arts; Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism Health, Social Care and Early Years

**Table 5 Colleges and sectors receiving 2007/8 ASN allocations**

## **Progression activities**

69. During July and August individual meetings were held with senior managers from 4 of the Higher Education Institutions to discuss progression activities and the role of the progression officer. In the light of feedback from these discussions and the logical inconsistencies which were considered over the summer period and reported above under Delivering the Business Plan, para 30, it was decided to put any further discussions with HEIs regarding progression activities on hold until the outcomes of

the SAF meeting and Management Board meeting held on the 28th September were known.

70. In early August, Lifelong Learning Network nationally were invited by HEFCE to submit an expression of interest to be either a case study or observing LLN for the HEFCE and LSC Evaluation of the Overarching Principles and Operational Criteria for a Common Approach to Credit. In early September we received notification that we had been selected to be one of eight LLNs to act as observers and 'peer review' the case studies of four LLNs. As an observing LLN we are required to attend two consultation meetings (9th October, 20th November), to contribute to a dedicated discussion forum at the Lifelong Learning Networks National Forum website, and address specific topics detailed on the observer's template (see appendix 5). Our participation in this evaluation to date has been most useful. It has enabled access to detailed written information about the approaches to credit and progression developments within four established LLNs, opportunities to engage directly in discussions and questioning with staff from those four LLNs, and opportunities to meet with staff from the other observing LLNs. Examples of best practice within two of the case studies in particular have been identified and follow up activities with these two LLNs have been initiated.
71. Our membership of the national LLN Progression Workstrand has been established and the Sector Skills and Progression Manager attended the second meeting of this group on the 23rd October. This meeting was partly sponsored by HEFCE. From the tone and content of conversations on the day it seems as though HEFCE view this LLN workstrand as a key forum for facilitating consultation and dialogue on progression activities between both LLNs and HEFCE, and LLNs themselves.
72. Following on from the outcomes from the SAF Planning Event and the Management Board Meeting held on the 28th September, a menu of progression activities to support the development of a partnership agreement model, and a commission model for progression activities has been produced. This menu will be incorporated into the agreement and commissioning documentation and model currently being devised by the WYLLN Management team.
73. Drawing on insights and understanding gained from our involvement with the HEFCE and LSC Common Approach to Credit evaluation (see para. 70), the national LLN Progression Workstrand, and feedback from the SAF Planning Event it has been decided to establish a WYLLN Credit and Progression Task Group, rather than establish a separate task group for credit and another for progression as described in the WYLLN Business Plan. The rationale for this decision is based on there being significant overlap, at both strategic and operational levels, on themes and issues that are central to these two activities. Therefore, it seems appropriate to adopt a structure which will facilitate and enable the coherent development of these two aspects of the Network's activities and legacy.
74. A proposal plan will be developed detailing the Network's approach to the development of a Progression Agreement Framework and Progression Agreement Model; and how the framework and model will inform the progression activities funded and commissioned with partner institutions.

75. To raise awareness of progression being one of the WYLLN's strategic objectives, to inform members of our proposals and activities regarding progression, and to raise awareness of progression activities taking place within other LLNs, a Progression Conference will be held in January 2008.
76. The North East LLN has invited the Sector Skills and Progression Manager to be a member of their Progression Activities Commissioning Panel. The panel will meet on the 12th December 2007.
77. A priority for the sector groups is to explore the opportunities for developing progression agreements and even a sub-regional framework for progression from the specialised diplomas currently being introduced. Already the WYLLN has provided an accessible gateway for HEIs and for those schools and colleges involved in the piloting of these new qualifications. To support these developments, sector groups have 14-19 advisors on them as representatives from the local authorities.

## **Tracking Learners**

78. As defined by the business plan, the project focuses on learners on vocational programmes and those in employment within our priority sectors. As the project has developed, greater emphasis, in terms of planning has been paid to the latter.
79. To monitor the progress of the project a West Yorkshire Lifelong Learner has been defined as the following:
- Any learner funded through WYLLN allocation of additional student numbers
  - Any individual that received support from WYLLN IAG activities
  - Any individual that received support from WYLLN Sector Group employer engagement / marketing activities
  - Any learner that has enrolled on a module, part programme or learning programme enhanced or developed by the Sector Group activities
  - Any learner that has enrolled on a programme as a consequence of progression agreements developed by the WYLLN.
80. The WYLLN target groups of learners are
- Individuals qualified to level 3, but not in learning or employment
  - Individuals already in learning (at level 3 or above)
  - Advanced modern apprentices
  - Employees already in learning (at level 3 or above)
  - Employees qualified to level 3 or above, but not in learning
  - Employees skilled to level 3 but not qualified
  - Individuals skilled to level 3 but not in employment or learning
81. A great deal of attention is currently being paid to the mechanism by which the West Yorkshire lifelong learners will be tracked. WYLLN has been working with other more established LLNs to explore tracking systems that are currently being developed and explore possibilities of building on those systems.

82. Until these systems have been defined and developed, an interim solution allowing partners to provide information on the WYLLN learners should be available from February 2008.

## Performance to date

83. Progress against milestones identified in the business plan has been slow. The main reason for this has been the lengthy time it has taken to appoint the central team, which will only become fully established in November. Progress to date has been described above. Table 6 summarises the current position against the milestones to date in the original plan.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Current position</b>
Progression agreement task group in place.	May 2007	The task group will be combined with the credit framework task group. The membership has been agreed and the group should meet by December 2007.
Audit of barriers undertaken	June 2007	This will take place once the task group has been established.
Credit framework task group in place by May 2007	May 2007	The task group has been combined with the progression task group. See above.
Curriculum task groups in place.	June 2007	The induction programme for sector leads has taken place. All sector task groups will have met by November 2007.
Employer engagement strategy developed.	June 2007	Employer engagement strategy is still being developed.
A minimum of 2 employer representatives are recruited per sector.	June 2007	Employer representatives have been identified for the first sector group meetings.
West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network brand developed.	April 2007	The logo has been approved and is in use. Further discussions in the SAF will take place to explore other brand identities.
Web development completed.	June 2007	Web site still under construction. It is planned to go live before December.
Publicity and promotion campaign including e-zine developed for the launch.	June 2007	Campaign and launch planned for the new year. A newsletter has been published in place of the e-zine.
IAG staff and service agreements in place.	May 2007	The review of the business plan delivery model has delayed the introduction of service agreements. Agreements will be in place by December 2007.
IAG Task group formed.	May 2007	The task group will be established by December 2007.
Audit of gaps in IAG completed.	July 2007	Audit undertaken following the appointment of the IAG Manager in September 2007.
Management Board membership, constitution,	Jan 2007	Milestone achieved.

role and remit are in place and working effectively.		
The Management Board meets quarterly and receives reports from the Executive Director.		Milestone achieved. An additional extraordinary meeting of the Board took place to approve the changes to the delivery of the business plan.
Executive Director and core staff recruited.	March 2007	Executive Director appointed by May 1 <sup>st</sup> . The core team will be in place by November 2007.
All financial and management information systems are in place.	May 2007	Financial systems for partnership agreements, sector activities and commissioned activities will be in place by December. Systems for ASNs have been agreed. The system for tracking LLN learners is still being developed.
Staff development plans are in place	Sep 2007	The plan will be in place by December 2007.
Staff development commences.	May 2007	Induction events on the implementation of the business plan took place in September, as did the induction event for the sector leads. IAG induction took place in October 2007.

**Table 6 Progress against early milestones**

84. While implementation of the business plan is behind schedule, much work has been carried out in laying the foundations for what will be a very successful project. The review of the implementation of the business plan will put the Network in a stronger position not only to achieve the targets, but also to leave West Yorkshire in a stronger position to continue to enhance progression after the project has finished. The effort taken in building strategic partnerships has resulted in an alignment of the activities of the Network and the work of the Sector Skills Councils, engaging with economic developments of local authorities (Leeds, Kirklees and Wakefield) and supporting the developments of and future progression from the 14-19 specialised diplomas. In addition, Yorkshire Forward is providing opportunities for WYLLN further education colleges to access capital funding (£500,000) to support the HE in FE agenda. This process has been aligned with the activities of the WYLLN.

85. The targets set out in the original plan together with end of year milestones are summarised in table 7.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2008 Milestone</b>	<b>2009 Milestone</b>	<b>Project target (2010)</b>
Number of work-based and vocational learners assisted	1000	2500	7500
New learners from work-based and	600	1600	3000

vocational backgrounds entering higher education.			
Progression agreements established	7	14	25
Foundation degrees developed per sector	No milestone set	1	3
Opportunities for staff development created	150	300	500
Number of employers engaged	100	400	1000

**Table6 End of project targets and milestones**

86. Because the project is behind the original milestones for the early period of its operation, the milestones and targets have been reviewed by the Management Board. However, because of the strong foundations that have been established and taking into account the delay in the appointment of the central team, it was felt the existing ones were achievable.

87. The operational plan for the remainder of the year is set out in Appendix 6.

## **Financial report**

88. The variance analysis from the start of the project until October 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 is shown in Table 7. It shows that a total of £249,052 has been incurred and evidenced.

89. The main reasons for the underspend to date are as follows:

- The recruitment of the core network staff has taken longer than initially anticipated;
- seven of the team will be in post by mid-November
- The contracts for the partnership agreements are in the process of being finalised
- and will be sent to partners in November so that initial payments can be made.
- The process for commissioning IAG and progression activities is now underway and it is anticipated that the first rounds will commit expenditure in January 2008.
- We are awaiting confirmation from the Directorate of Estates and Facilities as to the accommodation charges which will be backdated to when the network office was established. It is anticipated that the charges will be made before the end of the 2007 calendar year.

90. To take into account the underspend, a revised budget is presented in Table 8.

Description	Overall Budget	Actual to	Percentage
		31/10/2007	Achievement
	£	£	%
University of Huddersfield costs			
Network staff	1,020,496	70,885	7%
Staff recruitment	26,177	22,848	87%
Start-up costs	18,113	11,986	66%
Central & management staff time	86,727	19,392	22%
Contingency for redundancy	120,000		0%
Evaluation	80,000		0%
Equipment	19,074	6,152	32%
Travel	39,568	569	1%
Consumables	15,455	670	4%
Consultancy	62,400	62,400	100%
Hospitality	40,160	3,256	8%
Network training and development	6,500	1,413	22%
Accommodation	75,000		0%
MIS system	110,000		0%
Subscriptions	5,331	695	13%
Audit	5,409		0%
Publicity	107,802	1,132	1%
Overheads	153,415	45,052	29%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,991,627</b>	<b>246,450</b>	<b>12%</b>
Partner costs			
Administration - Management Board (University of Leeds)	5,000	2,602	52%
Project activity pot	250,000		0%
Network training and development	123,500		0%
Conference attendance	40,000		0%
MIS staff time	72,500		0%
Payments to sector groups	898,517		0%
Publicity	119,316		0%
Partnership agreements	1,035,000		0%
Commissioned IAG activities	351,815		0%
Commissioned progression activities	351,815		0%
Curriculum development staff time	759,073		0%

Sub-total	4,006,536	2,602	0%
Total	5,998,163	249,052	4%
HEFCE income	5,998,163	1,139,537	19%
Income to be allocated		890,485	
The project is 10 months through the 42 month contract, 23%			
	Contract	Actual to 31 Oct 07	% Complete
Total Project Costs	5,998,163	249,052	4%

**Table7 Variance Analysis to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007**

	Funding	Jan - Jul 07	Aug 07 - Jul 08	Aug 08 - Jul 09	Aug 09 - Jun 10	Totals
UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD						
Core staffing	HEFCE	23,080	289,879	357,407	350,129	1,020,495
Central staff time (PVC, Finance, HR, PINS, MIS)	HEFCE	13,769	23,604	24,312	25,041	86,727
Staff recruitment	HEFCE	15,177	11,000			26,177
Start-up costs	HEFCE	2,113	16,000			18,113
Contingency for redundancy	HEFCE				120,000	120,000
Evaluation	HEFCE		16,001	27,429	36,571	80,000
Equipment (PCs, laptops, etc)	HEFCE	2,074	17,000			19,074
Travel	HEFCE	569	13,000	13,000	13,000	39,569
Consumables	HEFCE		5,000	5,150	5,305	15,455
Consultancy (LB)	HEFCE	62,400				62,400
Hospitality	HEFCE	1,375	12,928	12,928	12,929	40,160
Network training and development	HEFCE		2,167	2,167	2,167	6,500
Accommodation	HEFCE		25,000	25,000	25,000	75,000
MIS system	HEFCE		100,000	5,000	5,000	110,000
Subscriptions	HEFCE	695	1,500	1,545	1,591	5,331
Audit	HEFCE		1,750	1,803	1,857	5,409
Publicity	HEFCE	923	41,107	41,107	24,666	107,803
Staff overheads (plus match funding of £133,787 required)	HEFCE	19,629	44,559	45,895	43,333	153,416
<b>Total</b>		<b>141,803</b>	<b>620,494</b>	<b>562,743</b>	<b>666,588</b>	<b>1,991,627</b>

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Administration - Management Board			5,000			5,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>5,000</b>			<b>5,000</b>

<b>FOR ALLOCATION</b>						
Network training and development	HEFCE		41,167	41,167	41,166	123,500
Conference attendance	HEFCE		12,941	13,329	13,730	40,000
MIS staff time (plus match funding of £72,500)	HEFCE		22,785	24,857	24,858	72,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>76,893</b>	<b>79,353</b>	<b>79,754</b>	<b>236,000</b>
<b>SECTOR GROUPS</b>						
Payments to sector groups	HEFCE		295,839	299,768	302,910	898,517
Project activity	HEFCE		83,333	83,333	83,334	250,000
Curriculum development staff time (plus match funding of £759,073)	50% /50%		253,024	253,024	253,025	759,073
Publicity	HEFCE		39,772	39,772	39,772	119,316
<b>Total</b>			<b>671,968</b>	<b>675,897</b>	<b>679,041</b>	<b>2,026,906</b>
<b>PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (IAG/PROGRESSION)</b>						
Payments to partners	HEFCE		345,000	345,000	345,000	1,035,000
Staff overheads - £1,171,581 match funding required						
<b>Total</b>			<b>345,000</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>345,000</b>	<b>1,035,000</b>
<b>IAG</b>						
Commissioned IAG activities	HEFCE		65,749	143,033	143,033	351,815

Total			65,749	143,033	143,033	351,815
PROGRESSION						
Commissioned progression activities	HEFCE		65,749	143,033	143,033	351,815
Total			65,749	143,033	143,033	351,815
Total Grant		141,803	1,850,853	1,949,059	2,056,449	5,998,163

**Table 8 Revised project budget**