

Newsletter

November 2007

Welcome

Welcome to issue No. 2 of the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network (WYLLN) Newsletter.

Since the inaugural newsletter back in July we've been very busy! We have now completed the recruitment process for the central team and all staff members have now commenced their posts.

We have also moved into our new accommodation on the 10th floor of the Central Services Building at the University of Huddersfield which we share with the Aimhigher team.

Now that the team is in place we look forward to progressing with this exciting project and working together with our partners towards meeting the targets set out in the business plan.

Craig Williams, Operations Director (Contracts) of Careers Bradford Ltd is optimistic that the work of the WYLLN is consistent with the government skills strategy in terms of providing progression pathways to higher education via non-traditional routes, "It is timely that the WYLLN will be delivering its services as the emerging universal adult career services takes shape and, having been through HE from a non-traditional background myself I strongly believe in what it is seeking to achieve. I wish the WYLLN well as it sets out to support more effective progression pathways to HE and positively impact on individuals and the economy of West Yorkshire."

We hope you enjoy reading this latest newsletter. If you have any suggestions for articles for the January 2008 newsletter please email:

wylln@hud.ac.uk

Message from the Chair

I am proud to chair the largest and (we believe) the most ambitious Lifelong Learning Network in England. The WYLLN is an inclusive partnership involving higher and further education, work based learning providers, Sector Skills Councils, employers and their representatives, the Learning and Skills Council, Yorkshire Forward, and community based organisations. All of these partners have one goal in mind – to improve the vocational and work-based progression of young people and adults into higher education. And all of them recognise that, through the Network, we have a significant opportunity not only to support the needs of learners across West Yorkshire but to grow our region's economy. During the four years of the Network we will see 3000 additional learners moving into flexible and relevant higher education provision, and over 7,500 people receiving advice, guidance and support. Our challenge is to ensure that what we put in place now is there for the long-term and with the strong partnership we have established we're confident that we have every chance of succeeding.

Professor Vivien Jones

Chair of the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, University of Leeds

Future of the Network

During the Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF) planning event and Management Board Meeting in September, discussions took place to consider sustainability of the Network's activities beyond the end of the HEFCE grant period.

The Board identified and approved legacies in order to ensure that the partnership is sustainable and achieves more than just the outcomes identified within the business plan.

The Board has adopted SAF recommendations on how to deliver the business plan. Progression, IAG and sector activities are all central to the success of the WYLLN. According to the new funding model, these core activities will be funded through partnership agreements within the FECs and HEIs, with specific activities commissioned through the wider partnership.

Also following on from the SAF planning event and Management Board meeting, a menu of progression and IAG activities has been produced. The WYLLN Management Team will incorporate this menu when devising the agreement and commissioning documentation and model.

Meet the Team!

Stephen Challenger, Executive Director

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Joanne Beaumont, Sector Skills and Progression Manager

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Joanne Lambert, IAG Manager

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Rachael Brough, Communications & Marketing Manager

Rachael joined the team on 5th November. Prior to this role, Rachael was based in London working as a Marketing Manager for Informa, a corporate events and publishing company and has completed both the CIM Professional Certificate and the Professional Diploma in Marketing. Rachael also has a degree in French with Spanish from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

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Alan Spain, Finance Administrator

Alan commenced his role on 12th November. For the last 4 years Alan worked as the Finance & Monitoring Manager of the Roundhouse Community Partnership (RCP) in Barnsley looking after local, national and European grant funding streams. The RCP is based in a deprived area of Barnsley and all grant money received is used for education and health programmes for local residents. A large part of the work carried out by the RCP also focused on youth crime initiatives and re-engagement work for disaffected young people. While working at the RCP Alan completed his Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) qualification. Alan also has a degree in Environmental Management & English from Keele University.

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Joanna Puzo, Administrator

Joanna started her role on 29th October. Joanna followed a vocational route at Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, successfully completing an advanced GNVQ in Hospitality and Catering. She progressed to the University of Central Lancashire to study for a BA in International Hospitality Management. Before joining the team Joanna worked at Bradford College as an administrator finally being located in the Quality Improvement and Performance Unit.

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Donna Samuels, Communications & Marketing Secretary

Donna joined the team on 5th November. For the last 5 years Donna has worked as an Administrator for NCH Children's Fund Kirklees. The Children's Fund Programme supports the development of the children's sector by sharing learning and evaluation of its commissioned services with those planning and managing children's services. Prior to that, Donna was an Export Shipping Clerk for Invensys Brook Crompton, a manufacturing company based in Huddersfield.

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Clockwise from top left – Joanne Beaumont, Alan Spain, Stephen Challenger, Joanne Lambert, Joanna Puzo, Rachael Brough, Donna Samuels

Regional Activity

The four directors of the Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) in Yorkshire and Humber meet regularly to co-ordinate their activities.

To date we have supported the development of the Train to Gain brokers and formed groups to co-ordinate IAG and credit framework. Recently the directors have met with the LSC, Yorkshire Forward, Foundation Degree Forward and the Regional Skills Partnership to review the role LLNs can play strategically. One of the key messages we communicated to them is that the LLNs collectively will invest over £21 million in the higher skills agenda over the next three years through the HEFCE LLN grant, additional student numbers and other funding.

Out of the meeting we agreed to initially focus on three sectors – engineering (with an emphasis on advanced engineering and metals), digital industries and financial services – and explore how we can drive up the demand for higher level skills input from HE providers.

In particular we will collate and articulate an employer 'offer' in each of these three sectors, aim to achieve a measurable increase in referrals to HE providers (including the number that are converted into actual business) and evaluate the initiative in a way that informs future joint working.

We will keep readers informed of the progress we make.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Part of Joanne Lambert's role as IAG Manager is to improve 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 in West Yorkshire has been undertaken through a questionnaire delivered to FECs and through face to face meetings with other IAG organisations. Gaps in current provision were identified along with which learner groups failed to receive adequate support.

The second activity was the IAG Planning Day that took place in October 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. Group sessions throughout the day generated a wealth of ideas and activities to build into the partnership and commissioned activity.

Early thoughts are to ensure that the partnership activity focuses on enhancing existing IAG provision within FECs with particular emphasis on those learners currently excluded from mainstream provision. The commissioned activity will focus on targeting those potential learners outside of the FECs, in employment, work based learning and in the community.

The first round of IAG commissioning will close on 21st December, there will be opportunities throughout 2008 to submit additional projects for consideration.

Sector Groups Update

The 7 sector groups have now been established and the sector officers are in place.

The sector groups will provide the engine through which the WYLLN will drive, shape and deliver its sector activities over the lifetime of the project.

Our contact and engagement with 10 Sector Skills 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 10 SSCs and have identified areas for development with each.

Each sector group will be following a costed work plan approach to managing its activities in the following areas:

- 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 levels 3, 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

All of the sector groups are currently undertaking an audit of the curriculum offer within West Yorkshire for their sector. An analysis of the outcomes of this audit, together with a review of the higher level skills needs for the sector will enable priorities for funding curriculum or programme developments to be completed by January.

If you would like more details or to become a member of a sector group please contact Joanne Beaumont.

Progression

Much work has been carried out on gaining an understanding of HEFCE's and other LLNs' requirements and approaches to progression and credit through the involvement of the WYLLN in national events and initiatives.

The WYLLN is one of eight LLNs to act as observers and 'peer review' the case studies of credit developments within four LLNs. As an observing LLN we are required to attend consultation meetings, 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.

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 23rd October.

The first meeting of our Credit and Progression Task Group will be held on 11th December. An invitation to 'nominate a representative will be circulated to partners during w/c 19th November.

During December and January, we will be initiating our Progression Partnership Agreement and Commissioning activities. To support these activities we will be holding a Progression Conference in January. Full programme details will be circulated shortly.

The University of Bradford and the WYLLN

Like many of our college and university partners getting to grips with the WYLLN is not easy. Several members of staff may be involved in the sector groups, some as leaders. Others will be involved in progression and IAG activities. Others may attend one or more of the Task Groups that are being established. Then there are commissioned activities that may involve another set of people. At the University of Bradford they are setting an internal LLN group, which will bring all these people together. Chaired by Geoff Layer, the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning and a WYLLN Board member, the group will attempt to co-ordinate their LLN activities to ensure that it fits with their own institution's strategy. WYLLN's central team have agreed to contribute in anyway that might improve the effectiveness of the group.

Please let us know of any examples of good practice in your WYLLN activities you would like to share with the rest of the Network and please let us know if there is any way the central WYLLN can help.

Coming Up

28th November – Regional LLN IAG Managers' Meeting

29th November – Next meeting of Sector Officers

3rd December – Strategic Partnership Meeting for funding of IAG and Progression Activities

14th December – Credit and Progression Task Group

21st December – Closing date for submission of IAG Project Proposals for 1st Commissioning Review Panel

January 2008 – Progression Conference

In early 2008 a WYLLN launch event will be planned – further details to follow.

6 Month Report

The WYLLN 6 month report was submitted to HEFCE on Monday 5th November. This newsletter summarises most of the report highlights, however if you wish to view a copy of the report please email wylln@hud.ac.uk