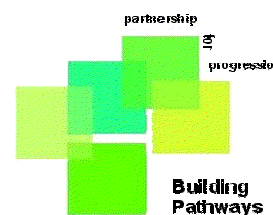


South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

Briefing No. 1

January 2006



Welcome to this first briefing of the proposal to develop a new Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) in South Yorkshire. The paper provides a background to the development of the Network and details the activity to be undertaken in developing a full business case to be submitted to the Higher Education Funding Council for England to resource a Network in the years to 2010.

The South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

The South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network will be developed out of the core partnership of the **Building Pathways** Project, the Further and Higher Education widening participation partnership. The partners include all the Universities and Further Education Colleges in South Yorkshire and bordering areas. Sheffield Hallam University is the lead institution.

The Network will be created in response to a new initiative from the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE). The provisional proposals for a Network in South Yorkshire have recently been accepted and the partnership is embarking on a development phase with the aim to submit a full business plan for HEFCE Strategic Development Funding by April 2006.

The LLN in South Yorkshire will improve progression opportunities through vocational learning and offer students the opportunity to move in and out of HE throughout their working lives, in identified curriculum areas. The LLN will add value to what institutions already do by offering progression entitlements and the development of progression accords between the partners, to a wide range of existing and newly developed programmes.

What are Lifelong Learning Networks?

In June 2004, HEFCE invited institutions to consider establishing Lifelong Learning Networks to provide a focus on vocational routes into and through higher education in the context of lifelong learning. A Lifelong Learning Network should have a number of key features:

- combine the strengths of a number of diverse institutions
- provide support for learners on vocational pathways
- bring greater clarity, coherence and certainty to progression opportunities
- develop the curriculum as appropriate to facilitate progression
- value vocational learning outcomes and provide opportunities for vocational learners to build on earlier learning
- locate the progression strategy within a commitment to lifelong learning, ensuring that learners have access to a range of progression opportunities so that they can move between different kinds of vocational and academic programmes as their interests, needs and abilities develop.

Funding for the LLNs will come from the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund. Potential Networks have been offered development funding to produce a full business plan. Networks could request funding for a Network up to £4m over a 3-4 year period.

What are the main aims of the South Yorkshire LLN proposal?

The South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network aims to:

- **build organisational capacity** and **change the culture** within further and higher education institutions locally to encourage greater progression through vocational routes to all levels of learning through the implementation of a **vocational learner progression framework**
- design, develop and deliver **curriculum** in further and higher education to improve effectiveness through **new programmes** and/or **flexible** provision for vocational learners
- facilitate **access** to higher education through the development of **IAG, progression accords, credit transfer arrangements** and **articulated progression pathways** across the Network
- influence the development of a **lifelong learning** culture and community

Which Curriculum areas will be included?

Initially the LLN will concentrate on three specific knowledge and skill areas that are of strategic importance to the economic growth and social, educational and material well being of people in the sub region.

- **Care**; including Health, Social Care, Early Years
- **Engineering**; including Manufacturing, Electrical, Electronic, Automotive
- **Public Well-being**; including Sport, Leisure and Public Health, Community development/regeneration, Public services

Who are the partners in the new Network?

The SYLLN proposal has the following institutions as its principal partners:

- Sheffield Hallam University (*lead partner*)
- University of Sheffield
- Barnsley College
- Dearne Valley College
- Doncaster College
- Longley Park Sixth Form College
- Northern College
- Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
- Thomas Rotherham Sixth Form College
- The Sheffield College

plus colleges in the South Yorkshire 'travel to study area'

- Chesterfield College
- North Nottinghamshire College

Other stakeholders, who will have key advisory roles in the partnership, include the LSC, RDA, FDF, OCN and SSCs. Also employers' organisations, training providers, Trades Unions and voluntary and community sector organisations concerned with lifelong learning will play a partnership role.

Who will benefit ?

The main element of the LLN proposal is the development of a **Vocational Learner Progression Framework**. Initially the development will include learners on Level 3,4 & 5 vocational programmes including:

- BTEC National programmes
- Access to HE learners and Foundation Year
- Work-based learners such as those on NVQs, Advanced Apprenticeships
- BTEC Higher Nationals
- Foundation Degrees
- Non- prescribed Professional Qualifications
- Learners requiring progression from Level 5-8 for Continuing Professional Development

How can you become Involved?

The new Network has invited key personnel from the principal and wider partnership to become involved in the development. Currently there are three working groups pulling together the relevant research and information needed for the LLN business plan. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Network and your organisation is not currently represented please contact

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