

Investigative projects

A total of 11 projects are underway: eight with Higher Futures and three with Aimhigher practitioner researchers. The projects focus on a range of issues including learner experiences, parental experiences and employer engagement. The projects cover a range of sectors including Early Years, Engineering and Sustainable Communities.

Practitioner: Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Transition Officer (Higher Education Institute (HEI))

Aim: To explore the IAG needs of part time, work-based learners at an HEI within the Higher Futures network studying on the Early Years Foundation Degree. The study was designed to investigate how the Careers and Employment Service in the HEI might enhance provision for this group of learners.

Methods: On-line questionnaire survey followed by interviews in order to develop case studies.

Practitioner: Head of Student Services (Further education college (FEC))

Aim: To examine the impact of Higher Futures activity on Access and Diploma students in relation to progression to higher education within the college. The study was designed to assess the impact of Higher Futures activities on current and past students' decisions about whether to continue to higher education, in order to produce recommendations for improving the delivery of the HF programme within the college.

Methods: Focus groups with learners who have progressed to local universities.

Practitioner: Business Development Adviser (FEC)

Aim: To explore the experiences of part time Foundation Degree Students in Early Years in an FEC within the Higher Futures network. The study was designed to investigate whether learners starting a part time degree course in Early Years perceive themselves to be prepared – in terms of study skills – for the course of study.

Methods: Focus group of 13 female students followed by in-depth interviews with 3 of the focus group participants.



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Dissemination

The practitioner research projects are currently being written up and will be included in a publication that will outline the development of the over-arching Higher Futures and Aimhigher research project as well as showcasing the studies of individual practitioners who have taken part.

Practitioners who have undertaken pieces of research are being encouraged to present their work at regional and national events, including the national LLN conference in Birmingham in November 2009 and the NIACE/LSRN conference in London in December 2009.

The practitioner research projects will be included in the LLN National Research Group's database of research undertaken across Lifelong Learning Networks.

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