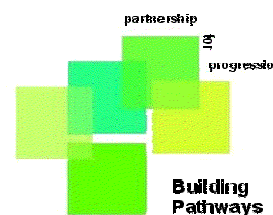


South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

Briefing No. 2

May 2006



This is a second briefing on the proposal for a new Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) in South Yorkshire. The paper provides a summary of the SYLLN Business Plan submitted to the Higher Education Funding Council for England to resource a Network in the years to 2010. The proposal requests Strategic Development funding from HEFCE and will be considered in mid-June. In the period to approval the Network are working together to further some of the proposals.

The South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network Proposal

The mission of the South Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network (SYLLN) is to transform access to and participation in Higher Education (HE) by vocational and work-based learners, through effective collaboration contributing to the developing learning culture within South Yorkshire, the achievement of individual personal potential and fulfilment, and the economic and social well-being of the sub region.

The Main Aims of the Network

SYLLN will have the following aims:

1. The creation of an inclusive and sustainable partnership to enhance the supply of HE provision and transform institutional cultures, processes and procedures
2. Improving progression opportunities into and through HE via vocational routes
3. Increasing demand from employers and vocational learners for higher level skills and education
4. Improving access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) and transition support

SYLLN will achieve these aims by enabling around 6,000 learners undertaking vocational and work-based learning across the Network to access Higher Education provision in South Yorkshire. SYLLN will aim for an increase of 5% in the number of learners accessing the identified HE provision through new Progression Agreements.

The SYLLN Partnership

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

Sheffield Hallam University (lead partner), The 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 and 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.

The proposal

In meeting the main aims of the proposal SYLLN activity will deliver:

- a sustained strategic alliance of partners
- identifiable and measurable changes within institutional processes and practices for the recruitment and admission of vocational and work-based learners into HE across the Network;
- the development of Progression Agreements, formally ratified and implemented by partners, to create smooth progression pathways for vocational and work-based learners,
- forums for each occupational sector that actively involve representatives from all the stakeholders with a focus on developing joint initiatives;
- the development of new Foundation Degrees (Fd) in the priority areas;
- opportunities for vocational learners from the identified sectors to access new or adapted HE provision;
- employer/education and training provider CPD exchange opportunities;
- the development and establishment of a coordinated IAG strategy across the network, referencing and adding value to existing provision;
- opportunities for learners to access specific vocational IAG and transition support
- a system for tracking learners and supporting engagement and re-engagement of vocational learners through the HE journey;
- an established procedure for the use of ILPs/PDPs;
- a series of staff development activities with teachers, trainers, and advisors to influence the culture of progression to HE by vocational and work-based learners
- the dissemination of good practice to support the principle and culture of lifelong learning in South Yorkshire.

The Priority Vocational Areas for SYLLN

SYLLN has identified 3 occupational sectors as a priority in order to pilot a range of initiatives and projects to address the gaps in current provision. The 3 pilot sectors chosen are aligned to the regional priorities set out in the Yorkshire Regional Economic Strategy, LSC Strategic Review and by the Regional Skills Partnership and are 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. They include Engineering; Health, Social Care and Early Years; Public Well-being and Sustainable Communities. SYLLN will also consider issues relating to the Construction and Creative Industries sectors as the project develops.

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.

How can you become involved?

The new Network has invited key personnel from the principal and wider partnership to become involved in the development. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Network and your organisation is not currently represented please contact:

Judith Smith
Building Pathways
48 Howard Street, City Campus
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield S1 2LX
Telephone 0114 225 3736
j.a.smith@shu.ac.uk or

Clive Macdonald
Director of Student Affairs,
Sheffield Hallam University
Tel: 0114 225 2045
c.macdonald@shu.ac.uk