

“we’re here  
to help you  
improve your  
workforce”

**Better the education & training. Better the workforce;  
better the business 2 conference report.**

**The Village Hotel, Walsall**

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## executive summary

Addressing the changes of the transformation agenda: better the education & training. Better the workforce, better the business (stage two).

## introduction and purpose

On 28 January 2009, a large and receptive group of educators, managers, trainers and practitioners met together at the Village Hotel, Walsall, for the second of two events in which participants debated how higher level skills might meet the needs of changes to service delivery. The second event built on the first event held on 8 October 2008 (whose recommendations included developing a regional requirement for a graduate skills framework with a Foundation Degree and forming planning partnerships) by turning its attention to the transformation agenda in adult social care and considering what its implications might be for educational provision.

## learning outcomes

1. Debate how higher level skills will meet the needs of changes to service delivery and the transformation agenda in adult social care.
2. Consider what the implications of the transformation agenda will be for education provision.
3. Develop a shared understanding of the range of approaches to flexible education and training delivery.
4. Consider the implications for an emphasis on work-based learning and assessment for the learner, the employer and the education provider.
5. Explore the components of planning partnerships for employers and education and training providers – working relationships and collaborative structures.

## participants

Sixty three people took part in the event, comprising 11 people from statutory councils, one from the NHS, one from probation, 10 from further education colleges, eight from universities, 15 from private, voluntary and independent organisations, three from sub regional care partnerships and 14 from Sector Skills Councils.

## programme of the day

Activity	Name and Title of Presenter	Description
Welcome and Instructions	<b>Janet Sharples</b> Chair – Skills for Care West Midlands	Chair of morning session
	<b>Jill Ward</b> Director of Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Lifelong Learning Network	Chair of afternoon session
Summary Report	<b>Pat Higham</b> Independent Consultant to Skills for Care	Presenting recommendations from “ <b>better the workforce, better the business</b> ” 8th October 2008 Conference Report
Keynote 1	<b>Karen Palmer</b> County Manager Organisational Development, Staffordshire County Council	The transformation of adult social care – How higher level skills will help meet the challenge
Workshop 1	<b>Dr Elaine Ballard</b> Sector Leader: Health, Care & Early Years Lifelong Learning Network	Transformation Agenda – examining job roles and the link to higher/ foundation degree level skills
Panel Interview	<b>Mary Keating</b> Regional Development Officer Skills for Care West Midlands	Transforming by Degrees Interview with a panel of employers
Keynote 2	<b>Gary Spolander</b> Principal Lecturer, Coventry University	The challenges of delivering flexible work-based learning
Workshop 2	<b>Anne Longbottom</b> Health and Care Discipline Co-ordinator Lifelong Learning Network	Overcoming the challenges for employers, students, education and training providers in the delivery of flexible work-based learning
Planning Activity	<b>Mary Keating</b> Regional Development Officer Skills for Care West Midlands	Planning for Partnerships between employers, education and training providers
Summing up	<b>Jan Burns</b> Regional Development Manager, Skills for Care West Midlands	
Closing Comments	<b>Jill Ward</b> Director of Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Lifelong Learning Network	

## recommendations for further action

### Partnership and planning

- Form a regional partnership of employers to develop a Foundation Degree in Social Care.
- Discuss in detail the issues of 'ownership', decision making, and governance for selecting higher education partners, designing the curriculum and assessment, selecting and supporting candidates, etc.
- Determine how the Foundation Degree will fit with other qualifications and how it is part of workforce planning.
- Select the higher education providers who will join the partnership.

### Viability

- Scope the numbers of students to be sponsored for the degree to ensure viability.

### Selection

- Establish a clear selection policy so that prospective learners' levels of literacy, numeracy and motivation enable them to benefit from higher education.
- Ensure that workers from small social care organisations have opportunities to attain a Foundation Degree.

### Hybrid Degree model

- Develop the Degree as a hybrid model which is constructed around a regionally agreed core of modules, with specialist modules developed sub regionally to suit specialist roles.

### Transferable Credit Framework

- Ensure that the credit frameworks and module sizes are agreed regionally to ensure transferability.
- A previous successful project that set up a regional PQ credit framework and structure could provide some guidance for achieving agreement.

### Curriculum

- Ensure that core modules comprise transferrable generic knowledge and skills, with priority given to communication skills; empowerment and critical thinking; knowledge of legislation, services, and policy frameworks (including personalisation and safeguarding; and gathering and evaluating information, decision making, problem solving and emotional intelligence).
- Include IT skills in the curriculum.
- Values, enabling others, partnership working, risk assessment, and aspects of leadership and management are other key generic areas for the curriculum.

### Flexible delivery, elective and free standing modules

- Focus discussion on how flexible delivery can be achieved in a realistic and cost effective way.
- Explore the potential of using on-line learning by asking specific questions about sources of learner support.
- Specific knowledge and skills relevant to particular service user groups and specialist roles can be selected for the development of specialist elective modules, provided the number of students for each elective module is viable.
- Consider establishing an initial free standing module (whose credits count towards the degree) that can serve as a 'taster' module to test out motivation and readiness.

### Work-based learning, assessment, and mentoring

- Consider carefully the resourcing issues of providing mentoring, placements, assessment of work-based learning, shadowing, day release, and sufficient support; and determine the funding available so that the Degree will be affordable and viable.
- Prepare prospective mentors for engagement at degree level.

## regional response to recommendation for further action

From the recommendations above four main aims and objectives have been identified and are currently being worked into a project action plan to be presented at the Skills for Care West Midlands Workforce Capacity Board in May 2009. Once the aims, objectives and outcomes have been agreed by the board the working group will be contacting you to move the agenda forward.

1. Continue to develop the Lifelong Learning Network and Skills for Care regional partnership to drive forward a graduate pathway for people working in social care.
2. Determine how foundation degrees fit with other qualifications and how they can support workforce planning and development.
3. Ensure the voice of employers is reflected in the design and delivery of a foundation degree in adult social care.
4. Ensure there is transparency and equality of access and progression across the region for learners undertaking higher level learning.

please find the full conference report at the following websites:

Skills for Care West Midlands  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/westmidlands](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/westmidlands)

Coventry and Warwickshire Lifelong Learning Network  
[www.cwlln.org](http://www.cwlln.org)

Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent Lifelong Learning Network  
[www.lnstaffordshireshropshire.org](http://www.lnstaffordshireshropshire.org)

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Lifelong Learning Network  
[www.hwlln.ac.uk](http://www.hwlln.ac.uk)

Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull Lifelong Learning Network  
[www.bbcsln.ac.uk](http://www.bbcsln.ac.uk)

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